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# PHONOGRAPH

## MONTHLY REVIEW

**APRIL 1931**

**We Phonograph  
Melba's Trill** Laning Humphrey  
With Ocillograms of Vocal and Flute Tones

**Filmplay Seen as Symphony**  
By George Brinton Beal  
The Talkies Judged in Terms of  
Dialogue-Counterpoint

**Phonographic Insurance on  
American Art** R. D. Darrell

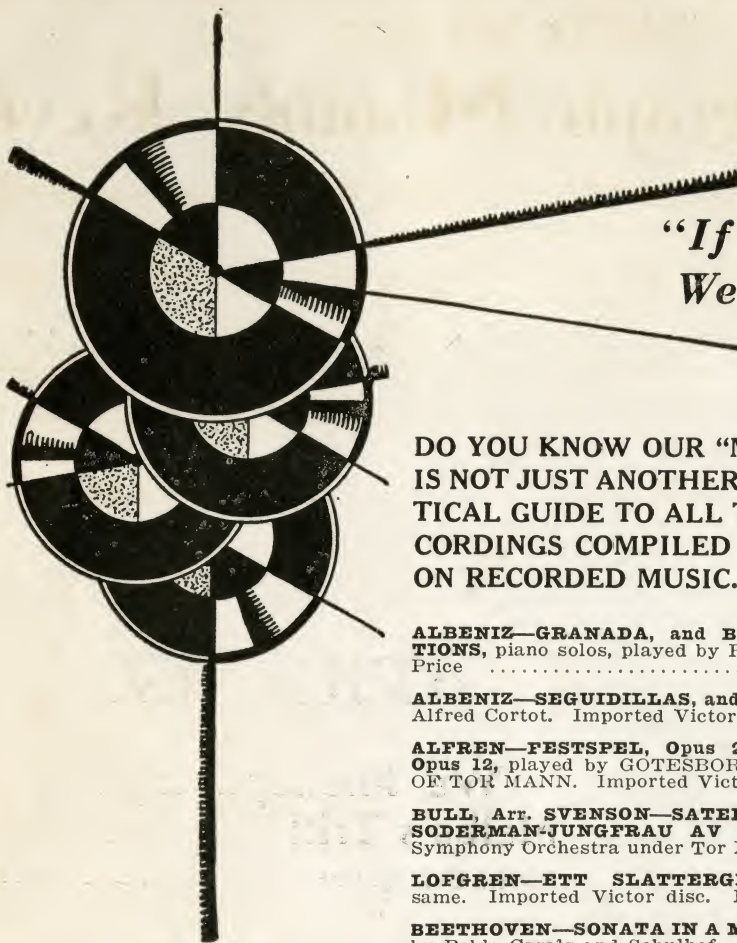
A letter from **Geraldine Farrar**

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# The Phonograph Monthly Review

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## EDITORIAL

SOUND reproduction in all its phases—phonograph, sonal films, radio, home recording—has sprung up to occupy a dominant position in modern life. Phenomenal as its growth has been (as an industry alone it must be ranked with the most extensive in the world), the most amazing feature is the suddenness and the force with which it has penetrated the public's consciousness. Each day in the news brings out announcements of fresh projects which would be considered incredibly fantastic if it were not for the actualization of so many incredible fantasies in the last decade.

Fears that we have created a Frankenstein monster are by no means groundless. The professional musician, the dramatic stage, amateur music-making have suffered in the onslaught. But revolution invariably involves disaster. Hope lies in the gradual assimilation of the new without complete extinction of the best of the old. Phonography is perhaps the least sensational of the factors of sound reproduction, but it has held most steadfastly to traditional artistic ideals. Radio and sound films are too newly, too unevenly developed as yet to contribute materially to genuine aesthetic advancement. Everything is experimentation.

The present issue presents a thought-provoking commentary on the place of music and the phonograph in supplying a solid base on which all sound-reproduction must build. We have endeavored to make it more than a mere chronicle of discs. The important recordings—and there is a spring freshet of them this month—are considered in the light of contributions to musical life as well as to more ephemeral entertainment. Mr. Beal's article estimates the sound-films in terms of musical and dramatic principles. Mr. Humphrey, with the kind assistance of Dr. Barss of M. I. T., links science with art to furnish conclusive proof of the artistry of one of the greatest singers of our time—whose living imperishable monument may be erected in every home and school through the phonograph. Herein lies the supreme justification of such a journal, its harmonization of revolutionary engineering developments with the ideals and traditions of the past, confirming their verity while immensely expanding and intensifying their field of contact with everyday life.

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# We Phonograph Melba's Trill

By LANING HUMPHREY

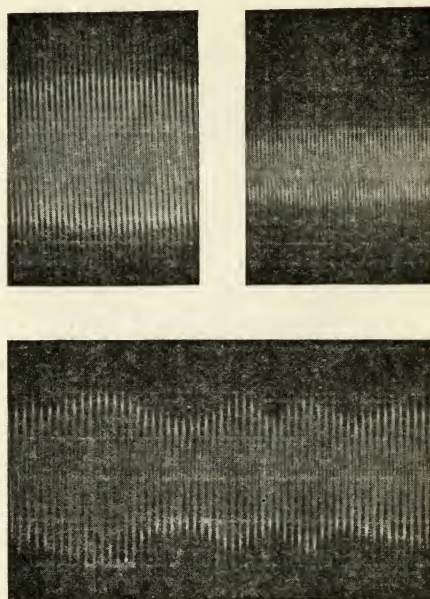
Vocal purity and pliancy eulogized by late diva's enthusiasts corroborated by cold visual analysis of a scientific mechanism

AND so Melba, from one of the living mementos of a bygone Age of Golden Voices, passes into the state of a tradition. The Melba tradition. . . .

It is a commonplace that each succeeding generation is inclined to reckon each successive filling of a niche in the hall of tradition as only reflecting the power of the older generation to view the past through rosy mists of memory, and to view the present in unfavorable comparison. When Patti's voice waned, the grey-heads doubted that her like would appear again. Patti's voice had become the standard of comparison. Eventually, however, Melba became the measure of perfection—in sheer voice. Sembrich was deemed her rival, but in matters other than voice—in the great qualities resulting from her intellectual musicianship. Yet one was struck with admiration by Sembrich's singing, and affection by Melba's.

From the chronicles, with the more substantial, if imperfect, testimony of recordings made in her sixtieth year, it appears that the art of Patti was the ingenuous one of sheer natural loveliness of voice achieving self-perfection by the promptings of musical instinct and good ear, rather than the artful studies which were evidenced in the singing of Sembrich and Tetrzzini. Essentially, this is the sort of artless art for which the obituary notices praise Melba. The tradition of Melba appears to be much closer related to that of Patti than of Sembrich; while that of Sembrich seems to be a criterion for judging Tetrzzini.

But so much of such discussion may be challenged as mere opinion. Fortunately, for reaching more dependably toward the truth, Melba left a great many recordings ranging from as early as 1904, down to 1926. They cover all the vicissitudes of progress in the process of mechanical recording, and then include the electrical. In other words, Melba's voice has been recorded from close to her prime down to her vocally not negligible old age. By playing the older records on instruments with electric pick-up, we catch many glimpses of truly unique qualities in Melba's singing. Yet, here again, we are confronted by the variability of human opinion.



*Ocllograms*

Upper left: sustained tone—Melba  
Upper right: sustained tone—flute  
Bottom: Melba's trill

The scanning of some leading Melba obituaries aroused in the present writer's mind the question, "Has Melba left anything for the admiration or instruction of the rising generation of singers?" A lucky coincidence, directly afterwards, was the beginning of some most interesting revelations on the subject.

In his music room, the writer got into a discussion of the art of song with a very accomplished young Boston soprano. Asking her impressions, he started playing, without announcing the performer's name, a Melba record with orchestra of "Ah, fors' è lui," continuing with "Sempre libera." (With the best intention in the world, it is hard for a person not to be influenced in amateur musical criticism by the spell of a great musical name).

At first the listening soprano was somewhat amused by what now seems the crudeness of an old-time recording. Then a look of enchantment passed over her face. Melba was trilling in the "Sempre libera."



"Who is it?" the soprano demanded, "I know every note of that aria, and she gives me a thrill for every one she sings."

"Oh, I'll show you something as good or better," the writer evaded. He played a later recording, by a celebrated coloratura of a later generation than Melba.

"This is lovely—but not to be compared with the first," the young soprano commented. "This one makes me think 'what a beautiful voice.' But I don't have to think about the first one. That woman has something that electrifies me in spite of the limitations of the record. Put the first one on again."

Now, here was the voice of Melba, even under a handicap, compelling tribute from a young soprano of the present generation,—a race of singers supposedly superficial in its vocal standards, and disdainful of the old criteria of sheer brilliance of performance, as against the modern stress on interpretation, dramatization, and such. This girl was responding to the voice of Melba as did the critics when she sang at the Boston Opera House in "Faust" and "La Bohème" thirteen years ago this last month, during a visit of the Chicago Opera Company. And Melba was then fifty-seven years old. She was received with critical acclaim although she had been singing for twenty-four years since she was first heard in Boston.

Yet, despite such chronicles, despite the favorable reaction of such temperaments as the young soprano who listened to the recording, the modern generation is inclined to be sceptical, to make the accusation that the recent praising of Melba was due to her belonging to "Old Times."

To the Massachusetts Institute of Technology the Melba record was taken. Dr. W. R. Barss, professor of acoustics, was asked whether it were possible to make a scientific proof that critical opinion was right in declaring Melba's voice in certain respects unique.

"I'll make some ocllograms of the record," Dr. Barss said.

Down to his basement acoustics laboratory, bristling with apparatus, we went. After adjusting a number of electrical connections among batteries and instruments on two tables, the professor started the record on a phonograph with electrical tone control, put out the laboratory light, threw a switch on a mechanism, and stood peering down into it. This was an ocllograph—the Westinghouse make, called an "Osiso." He was watching a four-sided mirror which, spun around rapidly by a motor, was visible from a light beneath. A trill came from the Melba record.

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"There's a beautiful tone," Dr. Barss commented as he stared at the glass—"very beautiful." It was emotional admiration rather than plain scientific statement. Yet he appeared not to be listening to the voice of Melba at all. He was looking. His guest looked at the same place.

For every change of tone, and every variation of loudness and softness in the music, there was a corresponding change in the shape of ripples of light pulsating on the mirror.

The orchestral accompaniment was quite subdued most of the time, but every so often it would emit a loud outburst, and the reporter noticed that this always produced a very wide and irregular ripple in the thread of light in the rotating mirror. On the other hand, during the frequent occasions when Doctor Barss exclaimed over the beauty of a tone, the orchestra was subdued, and the voice was causing wave-patterns of perfect evenness. At such times Melba was performing runs, roulades, and trills. As she ran up a scale as rapidly as one could do by drawing a finger sidewise across a piano keyboard, the thread of light showed the tiniest and most uniform ripple. Each trill produced an "accordion-pleated" wave with the crests and valleys lined up as if laid out by a steel square. The pattern was so regular



that one could turn away from the mirror and draw it from memory.

Next Dr. Barss placed a record of a flute solo on the talking machine. Every flute trill made a pattern indistinguishable from that made by Melba's trills in the dancing light on the glass.

The professor explained that the "sound-impulses" from the talking machine had been converted into electric impulses on reaching the oscillograph. Each variation in sound caused a corresponding fluctuation of electric impulse, which produced a variation in the form of a beam of light thrown on the mirror.

A singer may be very good, and receive high critical praise, Dr. Barss explained, and yet the oscillograph will betray faults. There may be flaws in the tone, or its production. In particular, after a tone is struck, the singer may not hold it unfluctuatingly until the end. Although the ear may be satisfied, the oscillograph may show a constant minute wandering from the true tone.

Melba's voice on the oscillograph, Dr. Barss said, showed absolute evenness, both as to tone and as to breath control when she sustained a note. Once she struck a note calling for susten-

tion, she held it without the slightest fluctuation until the end. When she trilled each of the notes involved was perfectly clear and showed a flawless pattern.

The record sung by a very noted soprano of a later generation than Melba was started by Dr. Barss. It was excellent singing, but when we looked in the oscillograph mirror, every "ornament" similar to those we had heard—and watched—from Melba showed irregularity in pattern compared with Melba's. Especially striking was the fact that the sustained notes of the second artist wavered a great deal in their boundary lines between the start and the finish of a tone.

Of course, these observations were made by watching a shifting image in a rotating mirror. Hence, they might be founded on fallable opinion. To provide unchallengeable scientific testimony of the fine qualities of Melba's voice, Dr. Barss kindly made some motion picture photographs of the Melba waves in the oscillograph. For the sake of a "foot-rule" comparison, he added a photograph of the waves from the sustained tone of a flute.

## An Outline of Melba Recording History

UNLESS it should be that there are still matrices waiting to be released, Melba's recordings by the electrical process are only three number—none of which is highly characteristic of her finest art. One, however, is significant for other reasons—historical and personal. It is an actual recording made at Convent Garden on June 8, 1926, the occasion of her farewell appearance. Her last public performance, Mimi's (and Melba's) Addio, is immortalized; and in addition the supremely moving speech in which Melba bids farewell to her friends. Those who affect a fine disdain of the phonograph as a mechanistic monster can have no more convincing rebuke than the literal re-creation of this moving scene. Melba's sentences are at first low-pitched and uncertain, but her voices rises vibrantly and clear as she thanks the management, the orchestra, even the faithful attendant at the stage door, and then bids her audience a last farewell. The brief speech is punctuated by the rustlings of the unseen audience, the break in Melba's own voice, and the tumultuous applause,—all as actually occurred in the opera house on that memorable occasion. The ability to keep that moment forever fresh, undimmed by failing memory, the death of Melba herself, the eventual death of all who were present, marks the phonograph as an outstanding contributor to history.

\* This notable disc is H. M. V. DB-943, available in this country through the American importers, as is H. M. V. DB-987, one of the other electrical recordings—Bemberg's "Un ange est venu" and the "Dite alla giovine" from Traviata, both sung by Melba and Brownlee in duet. The third electrical disc is released in this country by Victor (No. 6733): Burleigh's arrangement of "Swing Low Sweet Chariot," and Szulc's "Clair de Lune."

The list of acoustical recordings is a formidable one, too lengthy for complete inclusion here. The majority of them were released in this country by Victor, and while they are now withdrawn from the General Catalogue, they may be obtained from Camden in special pressings (see the Victor Red Seal "Cut-Out" List). Mr. S. E. Levy, of Shanghai, China, an authority on the older recordings, names the Bohème "Addio" (with "Mi chiamano Mimi" on Victor 6210) as perhaps the best Melba recording. I might recommend also the Traviata "Ah, fors' è lui" (from which the Barss oscillograms reproduced elsewhere were made) and the Rigoletto "Caro nome" on 6213. One of the most popular of Melba's discs was 6220, coupling the "Melba Waltz"—Arditi's "Se saran rose"—and the Tosca "Vissi d'arte." Records in which Melba was associated with other great names are the duets with Gilibert (Blangini's "per valli per boschi" and Bemberg's "Un ange est venu"), with Caruso (the Bohème "O soave fanciulla"), and the Mozart aria ("L'amero, saro costante" from Re Pastori) with violin obbligato played by Kubelik.

In the H. M. V. general and historical catalogues is a group of addition recordings not listed in the Victor catalogues (but procurable through Camden or the American importers), chief of which is the Rigoletto Quartet with McCormack, Sammarco, and Thornton. There were other H. M. V. releases, now withdrawn, one of which—Bizet's "Pastorale"—is recommended by Mr. Levy as the best of the Melba recordings up to 1906. Another is one of the few recorded Chausson songs—"Le temps de lilas." Mr. Levy contributed to the Gramophone's Collector's Corner (June 1929) a most valuable list of the works in Melba's first recording engagements, March 1904, October 1904, etc., including several pieces which were never released.



# The Filmplay Seen as Symphony

By GEORGE BRINTON BEAL

An acute critic of drama and music finds a counterpoint  
of dialogue in the best sound-films

**S**OUND, in pictures, is the most effective when it is the least noticeable. Foreign producers have learned this lesson sooner than have those who receive their fan mail in Hollywood. The reason back of this paradoxical condition is that sound—and by sound I include dialogue, or talk—can be legitimately utilized as emphasis or atmosphere but seldom as an aid to reality. Sound, being fundamentally alien to motion pictures, as an art form, has a consistent tendency to destroy such illusion as the picture may create in the mind of the observer.

A talking picture, differing in this in no way from a silent picture, or a play upon the stage, presented by living characters, must possess the rhythmic attributes of a symphony in order to be artistically effective. Each voice introduced, each sound added, is but a voice in the orchestration of the whole. A good director understands this and realizes it in his productions.

One of the finest examples of recent date of a well orchestrated production is offered in "The Royal Family," a Paramount production, based upon the stage play of this name, and played by a company almost entirely recruited from stage players. Ina Claire, Fredric March, Henrietta Crosman, all from the stage, and Mary Brian, a studio product of more than ordinary promise, from the standpoint of acting ability, provide a choir of voices skilfully tuned one to the other, and as skillfully matched to the subject matter intrusted to them for vocal interpretation. Throughout this film drama voices never clash either with each other or with the harmony of the action of the piece.

Scanning the screen horizon for further evidence of sound value, the eye comes to a full stop upon another really notable production, that of "East Lynne," by Fox again with a practically all-stage cast, headed by Ann Harding, Clive Brook and Conrad Nagel. Despite the fact that Miss Harding has a voice which, when mechanically reproduced, has a most unpleasant quality in its higher register, this film marks a long advance in production quality, both from the standpoint of the sound observer, and from the standpoint of fine technical direction.

Here is an instance of sound being used for its real value and not merely as an illustration, now grown boresome, that it is possible to make pictures talk and make noises, as the phrase goes. Frank Lloyd, who has done some good pictures in

the past, sprinkled in with others of more ordinary merit or lack of it, is the director. Here is a paucity of talk when to have said more would only have been to weaken the force of what has been said. A return to titles, to explain passage of time, is another innovation introduced in the course of "East Lynne." It is interesting to note that this use of printed titles seemed in no way to annoy, or disturb, the audiences sitting before "East Lynne." More use of titles would do much to relieve the present film theatre of a tiresome lot of unneeded talk, forced into the talking sequence of the play of the moment because of the necessity of getting some fact important to the understanding of the auditor before him.

In developing the emotional side of the story, excellent use of sound has been made. As the time of the story being told runs concurrently with the period of the Franco-Prussian war, use of this circumstance has been skillfully made. When matters in the affairs of Lady Isabel, as played by Miss Harding, become turbulent, first you are given a shot of Lady Isabel, giving a restrained dramatic interpretation of her feelings. Then there is cut in a battle scene, filled with the chaos and noisy turmoil of human strife. Here, the sounds of the actual battle are used to reinforce the inner battle taking place in the mind of the leading character. It is good psychology; good filmic sense, and excellent use of sound.

Another example of this sort of treatment comes to mind in the French film, "Sous les Toits de Paris," exhibited recently in some of the small art-theatres about the country. A street fight is in progress between the leaders of two rival gangs. It is staged under a street-light, at the intersection of two streets, one running parallel to the railroad. As the fight increases in violence, the action moves faster and faster. As the climax of the combat comes, there is a roaring, thunderous crashing noise as a train speeds between the spectators and the fight.

No careful reproduction of the panting breath of the fighters, the thud of blows, the rasping clutch of clothing scraped against clothing, or the half-spoken muttered curses of the fighters, could ever achieve what the rushing train does for this fight. The effect is tremendous in emotional effectiveness.

Away back in the days of silent pictures, David Wark Griffith discovered what an accompanying sound could do to enhance the action as shown



upon the screen. He applied his discovered knowledge to the showing of "The Birth of a Nation," one of the most emotionally effective film dramas in all film history, silent or otherwise. Behind the screen upon which "The Birth of a Nation," was projected, was a staff of 24 noise makers, their efforts directed by a noise director, seated at a switchboard which controlled various signal lights each light calling into play one of the staff of noise-agents. Seated at this switchboard, the director could see the film as it was shown. From this position of vantage, he directed his forces just as the leader of a symphony orchestra directs the men playing before him, and to the same purpose.

Sound, plying its forces upon the minds of the spectator, backed up and emphasized what the eye beheld upon the screen. In just such a fashion does a capable composer of music use one voice of his orchestra to reinforce and make more effective another, in order to gain some desired effect.

When producers learn that volume is not necessarily emphasis, disaster does not so much lurk in occasional lapses of talk as in continual vocalization, sound will come into its proper place in the general scheme of picture production.

Some European directors have already learned the value of silence. As yet, in this country, except in rare instances, the talking apparatus is still too new a toy to be permitted a second's rest. In "East Lynne," however, there is one excellent example of at least partial silence. Miss Harding as Lady Isabel and Mr. Brook, as Levison, are returning from some social event. They leave the carriage at the curb and walk together up the pathway and to the door of Lady Isabel's home. They come in silence save for a single sketchy sentence, something about a lonely old woman, spoken just as the couple pass out of sight within the house. It is an excellent example of a director's courage in discarding the illusion-destroying idea that, in a motion picture, the spectator must be ubiquitous.

Taking R.K.O.'s really great production of Edna Furber's novel "Cimarron," under consideration, here again the picture gains immensely in the realization of the aims of its makers because of the vocal choirs engaged in the making of it. Richard Dix, Irene Dunne, and all that vast company which came and went in this great epic of the building of a state, possessed, or were so directed as to seem to possess, voices that produced inner harmony. In sound, apart from dialogue, again good direction did much for this film. Excitement is made to grow so much through things that you see, as through things that you feel. And, in my opinion, the secret of arousing emotion in an audience lies more in sound than in vision, other factors being equal.

As the last remaining producer and film star to hold firm and unshaken to his belief in talkless pictures, the result of Charlie Chaplin's latest production, "City Lights," is naturally a subject

of general interest both in and outside of the film world.

While he will not admit the need, or usefulness, of talking in the making of motion pictures, Chaplin does not turn a deaf ear to value of sound. Hence, "City Lights," presents the one, and so far as I am aware, solitary example of a sound-without-talk film now before the public, excepting, of course, the synchronized revivals of the old films.

"City Lights" is a new production made and released in contemplated competition with the talking screen attractions with which it is contemporary. It is Chaplin, barring some added flesh which in some subtle sort of way takes off the edge of his pantomimic ability, a marvellously developed gift in its day, just as the generation of silent picture audiences knew and loved him. Little has been changed, practically no improvements have been made. Sound built into the film takes the place of appropriate sounds produced formerly from the orchestra pit from a carefully notated cue-sheet. It offers throughout a fine example of sound film making. In its opening scene people seem to speak dialogue, but actually make only curious inarticulate sounds, thereby preserving the Chaplin integrity in the matter of refusing to acknowledge the value of spoken dialogue, without entirely denying himself certain of its benefits. It results in a delightful bit of satirical filming quite without precedent. Much could be done along the line of characterized sound, that is to say, sound used for its own sake, rather than because of any meaning it might have inherent in it.

More and more directors and, perhaps what is more important, producers, are becoming acquainted with the fact that sound is a great force; that many fine things can be done by means of it.

### Sous les Toits de Paris

The first of French talkies to reach these shores, and an instantaneous success in the various small art-film houses where it has been shown is represented on discs by the title song—an attractive waltz, and a vivacious fox-trot, *C'est pas comme ça*, both played in *Marek Weber's* familiar polished manner, recorded with a careful ear for the orchestra's excellent tonal qualities. *Nick Lucas* and his *Troubadours* bring out an Americanized version of *Marlene Dietrich's* hit from the *Blue Angel*—*Falling in Love Again*, but the piece loses by naturalization; better is *Lucas' dapper* performance of a jaunty tune—*Walkin' My Baby Back Home* (Brunswick 6048). (The latter piece is also done in animated style by *Johnny Walker* for Columbia (2404-D)).

### New Contributors

GEORGE BRINTON BEAL is dramatic editor of the *Boston Sunday Post*,—a noted critic of stage, film, musical play, and ballet, as well as an active experimenter in electrical and acoustical science.

LANING HUMPHREY has contributed articles, largely on musical and scientific topics, to *Time* magazine, the *Boston Transcript*, *Globe and Post*, the late *New York World*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, etc.



# Phonographic Insurance on American Art

By R. D. DARRELL

Prof. Greet records Vachel Lindsay in his own poems

**P**HONOGRAPHIC France and England have done better by their poets and authors than the United States. The speeches of recent presidents, a few statesmen, a Lindbergh, have been enshrined on American discs, but our men of letters have not yet had the privilege of recording their voices for posterity, whereas in Europe not only political and stage personages, but many literary men have had that opportunity. Some have been private recordings (James Joyce in a chapter from his *Ulysses* is an example), some semi-private (Bernard Shaw for the Linguaphone Institute, Forbes-Robertson, John Drinkwater, *et al.*, for the International Educational Society); but several enterprising manufacturers—notably Pathé in France and Dominion in Great Britain have issued anthology albums of poems and prose read by leading authors.

In scanning the American horizon for literary phonographic prospects, the first names that come to mind are Carl Sandburg and Vachel Lindsay, both of whom are famed for their distinctive lecture-recitals, and both of whom have been heard with lively approbation before thousands of audiences. Sandburg's flair, however, is perhaps more for old songs and ballads—chanted to his own guitar accompaniment—than his own poems, and luckily we already have one example of his inimitable singing (the ballad of the Boll Weevil, and three spirituals on Victor 20135). Lindsay sticks to his own poems, delivered in a virtuoso blend of styles that range from a sonorous near-song to a dramatic *sprechstimme*. Only those who have had the delight of hearing him chant the grand lines of the *Congo*, *The Chinese Nightingale*, *General William Booth Enters into Heaven*, *The Sante-Fé Trail*, or *Kansas*, can realize the full possibilities of these poems. Fine as they are to the eye, they are only shells of themselves until they are *sounded*, and Mr. Lindsay's is the only voice that can squeeze out the full richness of their musical juices.

In the preface to Lindsay's *Selected Poems* (recently published in the Modern Readers Series of the Macmillan Company), Professor Hazelton Spencer of Johns Hopkins University writes: "Fortunately Mr. Lindsay has been able to reach what is probably the largest audience any modern poet has directly addressed. But he cannot recite for ever to new hordes of students as they come on; and the precise vocal tune, which can never be recorded by musical notation on paper, will inevitably be lost unless there is enough common sense alive in the land to take out insurance on some of the finest things in American art. Phonograph records of every poem in this book, exactly as Mr. Lindsay chants it, ought to be made, and be made at once." This challenge was too much for Professor Cabell Greet of Columbia University (already a contributor to phonographia through his notable work with Professor H. M. Ayers in recording examples of American dialects, a group of which are available in the Victor Educational Catalogue—see the letter by "Historian" on page 338 of the July 1929 P. M. R.). Prof. Greet, under the auspices of the English Department of Columbia and Barnard, persuaded Mr. Lindsay to spend the best part of a week before the microphone, a week which resulted in a batch of forty double-sided records embodying some thirty poems. Out of the 226 pages of the *Selected Poems* over 114 pages have been recorded.

The list of titles includes the big poems already mentioned, plus the Booker Washington Trilogy, John L. Sullivan, Golden Whales of California, Hamlet, Ghosts of the Buffalo, Kallyope Yell, Bryan, I Know All This When Gypsy Fiddles Cry, An Arizona Sheriff, and many others, not excluding a series of the truly delightful children's poems: Dirge for a Righteous Kitten, the Mysterious Cat, Little Turtle, Doll's Arabian Nights, When I Was a Tree, etc.

I have not had the opportunity of hearing any of the records themselves (as yet there are only two sets, one at Mr. Lindsay's home in Springfield, Illinois, and the other at Columbia University), but when Mr. Lindsay was in Boston this month I heard him read many of the poems he had set, and it required no great technical experience to know that his exceedingly sonorous and flexible voice would record to perfection. The opportunity for some company or society to acquire the rights of releasing these records for public sale is one that should not go long a-begging, for the universities, schools, clubs, etc., where he has chanted in person, to say nothing of the many individuals who know his poems either from his own voice or the infinitely less colorful printed page, provide an extensive and eager market for the discs. In addition, there is a considerable vogue throughout the Middle West for dancing to Lindsay's verses, and Mrs. Lindsay writes me that she receives inquiries every week from gymnasium and dancing instructors who "would give their eye teeth for records of some of the more irresistible bits of Lindsay rhythm." Likewise, "the present and growing vogue for verse speaking contests, such as the one scheduled for Evans-ton in April, opens another field."

Mr. Lindsay tells me that Prof. Greet hopes to record Robert Frost also. In such men as Frost, Lindsay, Sandburg, and several of the other American poets, we have a distinctively American art. Books record it in skeleton, but besides its purely literary phase there is a *sound* aspect, available only in the author's own readings. Here is a superb chance for the phonograph to demonstrate again its unparalleled value as a preserver of traditions, and as an educational and entertainment medium of the first order.

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# Correspondence

The Editor does not accept any responsibility for opinions expressed by correspondents. No notice will be taken of unsigned letters, but only initials or a pseudonym will be printed if the writer so desires. Contributions of general interest to our readers are welcomed. They should be brief and written on one side of the paper only. Address all letters, to CORRESPONDENCE COLUMN, Editorial Department, THE PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW, 5 Boylston Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

## A Letter From Geraldine Farrar

EDITOR'S NOTE: Mr. William H. Seltsam's article on Miss Farrar in the January issue, and its repercussions in the correspondence columns of the February and March numbers, have aroused more controversy among the phonographic faithful than any discussion since the gaudy days of S. K.'s denunciation of music and his subsequent musical education, or the memorable duel between Dr. Aleman and T. M. W., regarding the propriety of Chaliapin's singing Sancho's rôle as well as that of Quichotte in his recording of the final scene of Massenet's *Don Quichotte*. In reply to the letters protesting against Miss Farrar's refusal to record again, she has kindly written the following letter further amplifying her views on the quality of *lieder* recording and its appeal to the record-buying public.

Tucson, Arizona

Both your letters and enclosures find me in glorious desert lands where the stupendous beauties of nature fill eye and spirit. I have just concluded a series of happy farewell appearances on the western coast, always an enchanting land and very particularly beautiful at this time of year.

You are very kind to offer any space in your magazine anent the rebukes directed at our statements regarding the present method of recording: as they are directed to me, and rightly, if persons hold to differences of opinion. I can only repeat that I am not interested in further *personal* recording, and have reason to fear unsatisfying results of nuance and timbre: for my own feeling of the *Lieder* delicacy, as I understand it, will not permit the volume and monotony I find in all too many plates that amplify each voice to the detriment of its *individual* appeal.

As I lay great stress on psychological *insight* of interpretation, one does not feel equal to coping with the laboratory experts who hold to other effects for successful sales.

Meanwhile — granting some excellent foreign plates — I hardly feel I care to go to Europe for an experiment that would give me no great pleasure, at a time when I am concluding my career.

My enjoyment in hearing others is nowise marred and I have a large and agreeable collection of discs, out of which I obtain many a pleasant hour. That is not saying, however, that I should care to immortalize my own present efforts, being entirely without vanity in this regard.

Very sincerely  
(Signed) GERALDINE FARRAR

(The "large and agreeable collection of discs," and the pleasure, in it, which Miss Farrar mentions in her final paragraph, have both been enhanced by readers of the P.M.R., as she lost no time in informing us during her recent visit to Boston. Mr. Seltsam's article having quoted her as owning no Nordica record, readers from many points of the compass promptly sent her the Columbia recordings. She expressed the keenest surprise and appreciation over this thoughtfulness, and the really live interest of phonophiles for their subject.)

## Mr. Gerstle Points Out

EDITOR, PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW:

The passage in the "Fire Bird" referred to by A.H.B. as having been omitted from the Columbia version begins at No. 9 on page 70 of the revised score of 1919 published by Chester, and continues for eleven bars. I quite agree that this is one of the high spots of the Suite. It might be of interest to know that my "Fire Bird" set consists of the Stokowski recording plus the second record of the Columbia set, which contains the Supplication of the Fire Bird and the Princess Play with the Golden Apples, both charming movements, and which should be played between Parts 1 and 2 of the Victor set. Is the latter, none of the Berceuse is omitted (as stated), but there is a cut in the Finale, which, to my mind, improves it, the matter omitted being out-of-keeping with the mood of the movement.

You speak of the Bodanzky and the Schillings versions of the "Meistersinger" Prelude as being the best. Have you heard the new one by Bruno Walter? I had my doubts as to whether an adequate Prelude could be put on a single record. Hearing this one dispelled such doubts. It is easily the leading version, in my opinion. Walter's new four-part Siegfried-Idyl is the only one that can be compared with Klemperer's Polydor set, little known in this country. They are both superior to Muck in this music, *pace* Lawrence Gilman.

Your commendation for explicit labeling is always in order, except when the labeling is apt to be misleading, as in the case of Columbia 2384-D. In the first place, "Book 2, No. 4" may refer to any one of the several complete editions of Bach's organ works, no two of which are arranged in the same way, to my knowledge. In the second place, how the word "Entr'acte," which hitherto has been applied, obviously enough, only to stage works, crept onto the label is one of those unfathomable mysteries. The truth of the matter is that 2384-D is simply the fugue of the great G minor Fantasia and Fugue. The Fantasia, played by the same organist, has been obtainable through the importers for some time back. Why Columbia has chosen to release the least interesting portion of this work only, is another of those unfathomable mysteries.

New York City, N. Y.

HENRY S. GERSTLE

## Attila

EDITOR, PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW:

I have read in the last issue of your very important magazine, the criticism signed by R. B., about the Victor record number 8194, that is, the trio from Verdi's "Lombardi," and the trio from the same composer's "Attila." The reviewer says that the opera "Attila" "is absolutely defunct, no other mention of it is coming to hand but the present record." As you know, I am a collector of records since many years ago, and probably in no other collection will be found so many "rare" records as there are in my own. And in reply to Mister R. B., I must tell you that I have the following records from the opera "Attila": The trio, sung in English, by Marie Rappold, Karl Jorn, and Arthur Middleton (Praise ye, Edison Re-creation); the same trio by the Columbia trio; the march of Attila (Victor record), a selection from "Attila" (Victor record). All these records have been pressed in United States. Besides those already mentioned, I have the following, pressed in Europe: "Mentre gonfiarsi l'anima," by the basso Ebrico Vannuccini; "Oltre quel limite," by the same basso; "Allor che i forti," by soprano Maria Wroblewska, and "Da te questo or m'e concesso," by the same soprano, all Odeon records. As you see, the new trio by Pinza, Rethberg and Gigli, is not the only mention of the opera "Attila," as your reviewer suggested. And let me give the above information in behalf of the phonophile, who will probably be interested in getting records of old and unknown operas.

Habana, Cuba

RICARDO M. ALEMAN



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(4th side—Brahms: Symphony No. 1, in C Minor: Third Movement—Un poco allegretto)

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## Berlioz

EDITOR, PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW:

Some of the readers may recall the thrill that came when Columbia announced the first lengthy set of electrical recordings. The "Symphony Fantastic" under Weingartner.

The issuance of such a work in nearly complete form proved a mile stone along the road of phonograph history. At the moment, the present issue of the same work under the baton of Pierre Monteux affords an interesting study of the progress made in some six years.

Among the recording conductors who are known for their understanding of Berlioz we must mention Weingartner, Pierné, Walter and Harty. Monteux has convincingly demonstrated that he has a sympathy and understanding of Berlioz that cannot readily be surpassed.

All told the new set ranks among the best of symphonic sets,—not alone from a secondary view point Monteux has concerned himself with the work as a whole and makes no attempt to overwhelm by sheer brilliance in parts. Of the many concert performances I have heard. I do not recall one so thoroughly satisfying as the present reading of the scope. Particular mention should be made of the lovely wood winds—seldom has the recorder so deftly caught their spirit.

I know most of the stock Berlioz criticisms by heart. However, the "Symphony Fantastic" when ably interpreted becomes a work that is intensely interesting and alive. Time has not dimmed the vivid hues of his orchestra and the originality of many of the Berlioz scores. After reading reviews such as appeared in the P.M.R., of this set I cannot refrain from dissenting.

Weingartner infers that Berlioz is a step ahead of us, rather than being outmoded. Perchance he is right  
Philadelphia, Penn. E. H. WANNEMACHER

## Recording Trifles

EDITOR, PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW:

In his criticism of records in the December issue (1929) of "The Gramophone," W.R.A. says, "The dexterous Toscha Seidal, like most of the fiddling tribe, still plays about with trifles." How true this fact is, one has only to look at the gramophone catalogues to see.

Even little Yehudi Menuhin is following the example of his fellow artists, and, although there is ample time in the future for him to give us a "big work," it would be an interesting moment to possess the boy's recording of the Brahms' Violin Concerto while still in his childhood, for he is only just thirteen years old.

There is no getting away from the fact that the gramophone has come to stay, and in its way the gramophone public is every bit as important as the concert public.

Apart from their gramophone public though, there is another important reason why artists should make a point of recording concerti. As everybody knows, the Flonzaley Quartet has now disbanded; and to a future generation it would have been only a tradition, a great tradition, admitted, but only a tradition if it had not been for the gramophone. As it is, we have lasting momentos of the Flonzaley at its best, and with these recorded string quartet masterpieces ever at hand, to revel in ourselves and to pass on to future generations of chamber music enthusiasts; the Flonzaley Quartet will go down through the history of music as a great tradition, supported by the convincing proofs of the perfection of their recorded work.

Can we hope the same of our great solo artists? To a future generation will Heifetz, Elman, Kreisler, Kubelik and many others be only a tradition with a score of recorded trifles as the only evidence of their great art; or will the violin concerti of the old masters, recorded with orchestral accompaniment, bear lasting witness to their genius?

One cannot help wondering whether the artists in question select these trifles to record, or whether the selection rests with the gramophone companies. There are societies proposed for the protection of music and various other deserving causes, but what I think we really need is a grand petition from the great music loving public to the gramophone companies for "big works by big artists."

London, England

C. A. B.

## COMPOSERS . . .

ALBENIZ, AUBER, BANTOCK, BARTOK, BAX, BERLIOZ, BLOCH, BOITO, BORODIN, BRIDGE, BRUCKNER, BYRD, CARPENTER, CHABRIER, COLERIDGE-TAYLOR, CORELLI, DELIUS, DOBROWEN, DOHNANYI, EICHHEIM, FALLA, GLINKA, HARSANYI, HONEGGER, IPPOLITOW-IVANOW, IRELAND, JUON, LAMBERT, LIADOW, MEDTNER, MILHAUD, MONTEVERDI, NIN, PIZZETTI, POULENC, PROKOFIEFF, PURCELL, RABAUD, REGER, SATIE, SCHMITT, SRIABIN, SZYMANOWSKI, VIVALDI, WEELKES.

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## Dohnanyi and Harry Janos Records

EDITOR, PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW:

In the February issue of your magazine Mr. Harry L. Anderson, in his article on recorded pianists, has written some words on Erno von Dohnanyi's records. I complete those remarks with the following list of Dohnanyi's records I possess in my collection (all Dohnanyi's records issued by Hungarian H. M. V. to date):

Delibes (arr. Dohnanyi): Coppelia Waltz, and Dohnanyi: Pastorale, piano solos by Ernő Dohnanyi. Hungarian H. M. V. AN-443. Schumann: Kinderszenen (1-13), piano solo by Dohnanyi. Hungarian H. M. V. AN-456-7 (4 sides).

Herewith I also send you a complete list of Hungarian H. M. V. records from "Harry Janos" by the famous composer and folksong-collector—Zoltan Kodaly:

Bordal (Drinking Song), sung by Maria Basilides with piano acct. by Dr. Otto Herz. AM-1687. Harry Janos Intermezzo, and Tiszan innen, Dunan tul (This side of the Tisza river, the other side of the Danube river), sung by Isabella Nagy and Emmeric Palla, of the Hungarian Opera, accompanied by the Royal Hungarian Opera orchestra conducted by Ferdinand Rékai. AN-208 (12 inch). Hej két tyúkom tvalyi (two hens of mine), Hogyan tudtal (How did you know?); Szegény vagyok, szegénynek születtem (I am poor, I was born poor), sung by Isabella Nagy, accompanied by Royal Hungarian Opera orch. AN-212 (12 inch). Töborzo (Enlistment); Piros alma—Felszatom a csaszar udvarat (Red Apple—I am going to plough the Emperor's courtyard), sung by Emmeric Palla, accompanied by the Royal Hungarian Opera orch. AN-213 (12 inch).

These above mentioned records are very good. The recording is excellent. This list will complete your lines of suggestions you have given as a conclusion to the letter by Mr. Charles H. Mitchel in your February issue.  
Nitra, Slovakia

EMMANUEL UGGE



# Reviews of New Records

Special reviews of larger works / classified reviews of domestic releases  
lists of new European releases / reviews of imported records

## Siegfried Idyll

(in contrasted masterly readings)

WAGNER: *Siegfried-Idyll*, played by the STATE OPERA ORCHESTRA, BERLIN, conducted by OTTO KLEMPERER. BRUNSWICK 90135-6 (2 D12s, \$1.50 each).

*The Same*, played by the BERLIN STATE ORCHESTRA, conducted by KARL MUCK. VICTOR 7381-2 (2 D12s, \$2.00 each).

Gramophiles should feel themselves extremely lucky to get in one month two such superlative versions of a composition which all agree in praising most highly. John Runciman has said: "it (the *Siegfried-Idyll*) is, in a word, the most beautiful thing Wagner ever wrote; and Lawrence Gilman is even more enthusiastic: "It has not its like in all music for blended loveliness, blitheness, poetic charm and enamouring tenderness." Certainly, although many of the passages in the *Ring* and elsewhere may be coming to seem a little grandiose and cheap to some of us, this music still retains its full validity. To me, at least, it seems that Wagner was at his best when expressing tenderness, as in the Third Act of *Tristan*, and secondly, youthful vigour, as in the music connected with *Siegfried*; in this composition, are therefore combined his two most perfect moods—a blending of the utmost felicity.

Before considering the records themselves, I cannot resist recalling again the well-known story of the origin of the *Siegfried-Idyll*. It was composed while Wagner and Cosima were living in their villa at Tribschen, in November, 1870, not long after the birth of their son Siegfried, in anticipation of Cosima's thirty-third birthday, which fell on December 25. The first performance may be described in the words of Hans Richter who played one of the clarinets and the trumpet part: "On Christmas morning the little orchestra took their places on the stairs of Wagner's villa at Tribschen, having previously tuned their instruments in the kitchen. The master conducting, stood at the top . . . at the bottom the 'cello and double-bass."

Written for an orchestra of sixteen, in which the wind instruments predominate, the piece may rightly be called "chamber music" and justifies its inclusion in Cobbett's *Cyclopedic Survey*. This consideration should, I think, be an important factor in determining the interpretation. In the first place a large, much less a full orchestra should not be used—it destroys both the mood and the original balance between strings and wind. In the present examples, Klemperer gives the *impression*, at least, of not using more players than the original sixteen; Muck's band is apparently considerably larger.

Given the same music and the same orchestral organization, there is on the whole quite a striking difference between the two sets. Muck is more lighthearted and unemotional, whereas the keynote of Klemperer's performance is a hushed and breathless tenderness which are profoundly moving. In neither, however, does one get the impression which I first received from an unimaginative performance, that this is merely a pot-pourri of some *Siegfried* themes decked out in a rather incongruous orchestration; both conductors as was to be expected, appreciate the intimacy of the mood, but it seems to me that Klemperer expresses it more completely. His whole interpretation is fixed in a very subdued key, whereas Dr. Muck often allows himself some decided *fortes* which many people may consider as desirable contrasts. Except in this respect, however, Klemperer follows the composer's



Otto Klemperer

directions with a care and sympathy which are marvellous—rarely, if ever, have I heard a phonographic performance in which a conductor has dared to be so delicate and restrained in his effects. But it is above all on the last side that he shows himself supreme—the *bedeutend langsamer* ending is a section which one could not imagine done more exquisitely. Individual excellences in both sets are too numerous to mention specifically. The first clarinet on the Victor records does some beautiful work, and his interpretation of the phrases marked *lustig* is delicious. In the Brunswick set, both the tone and the playing of the horn in the *horn-call* on sides three and four, are the most beautiful I have yet heard from this instrument on the gramophone—it is the very essence of the romantic richness which one had always imagined as belonging to the perfect horn.

In respect to recording, the Victor is certainly the more crystalline, which word describes both its clarity and its occasional faint tendency to harshness. The woodwinds and trumpet (at its only entry) are especially well-defined. The Klemperer set, must, however, remain a triumphant vindication of the phonograph's ability to record the most delicate *pianissimi* as musical sounds and not mere rustlings.

Although my own prejudice in favor of the Klemperer reading has probably led me to dwell especially on its merits, I must insist that undoubtedly many people will, like Lawrence Gilman, find the Muck interpretation perfect. As always, when two such nearly equally good but differing interpretations come along, one will want, if one can, to own both.

ROBERT H. S. PHILLIPS



## Mengelberg's Bolero



RAVEL: BOLERO, played by the CONCERTGEBOUW ORCHESTRA OF AMSTERDAM, conducted by WILLEM MENGELBERG. COLUMBIA 67890-1-D (2 D12s, \$2.00 each).

Mengelberg's Boléro, while the first recorded version to be issued in England, has been preceded in this country by those of Ravel and Koussevitzky, not to mention the fox trot arrangement conducted by Shilkret. There are two types of reading, one which gains the desired climactic effect by the maintenance of an absolutely steady beat throughout the piece, the other by utilization of a gradual accelerando to further heighten the growing intensity of the scoring of each repetition of the theme. The composer follows in practice the method that is obviously indicated in the score—keeping the beat absolutely rigid, while Koussevitzky exemplifies the accelerando reading, obtaining a more frenetic climax, while losing to some extent the hypnotic effect of crescendo pounding of the boléro rhythm on the drums. Mengelberg follows Ravel in intention, but towards the end he cannot resist a slight quickening of the beat to further emphasize the gargantuan crescendo of both actual tone and tonal coloring.

Three conductors; three readings. *Faites vos jeux!* The qualities of the Koussevitzky and Ravel records were dealt with at some length in the June, 1930 issue. Mengelberg's combines some of the qualities of the other two: the less romanticized coloring and much of the steadiness of the composer's version; some of the greater animation and warmer sonority of Koussevitzky's. The Concertgebouw Orchestra's soloists play well and are strongly but faithfully recorded. The final explosion is kept within musical limits—insofar as the scoring permits. All in all, a sound recorded performance, well planned and capably transferred to the recording wax. It should be carefully considered with the other in making a definite choice, a choice which will rest finally upon individual taste and prejudice.

In my review of the other versions I prepared an outline of the orchestration of the various repetitions of the theme. I might repeat that this theme (which has distinct echoes of the once popular song, Valencia, by the way) is not a simple one, repeated *ad infinitum*, but a cleverly constructed musical sentence in two parts, each of which is repeated, making a unit of seventy-two measures which is the basis of further repetition. The basic unit is repeated four times, followed by an unpeated statement of the bipartite theme, the last measures of which crash into the astounding modulation into E major and the disintegration of the boléro rhythm into the tumultuous coda. The "breaks" in Mengelberg's version are the same as in that of the composer—that is part 2 begins with the first half of the theme played by the flute and trumpet in octaves; part 3 with the second half for trombone solo; part 4 with the second half for a combination of wood wind, violins, violas, soprano saxophone. The high trumpet in D and the trombones are added later.

## Burger als Edelmänn

STRAUSS: *Der Bürger als Edelmann*—suite for chamber orchestra, played by the STATE OPERA ORCHESTRA, BERLIN, conducted by RICHARD STRAUSS. Incidental solos by WOLFFSTHAL (violin) and MEINARDI (cello). On the 10th record side the same orchestra, conducted by ALOIS MELICHAR, plays the *Valse d'Amour* from REGER's Ballet Suite, Op. 130. BRUNSWICK Album Set No. 28 (5 D12s, Alb., \$7.50).

The salient differences between this version by the composer and that conducted by Straram for Columbia last December are accurately pointed in the use of the German and French titles respectively. Strauss' performance is as essentially Teutonic as Straram's is Gallic. Direct comparisons are unnecessary, except perhaps to say that in the Columbia set it was the orchestra and its suave performance that commanded first attention, while in the composer's version it is the music itself that occupies the center of the stage.

Here, commendably, the suite is uncut. The various pieces occur in their proper order, and when two appear on a single record side they are conveniently separated by a few blank grooves, as suggested in R. H. S. P.'s review of the other version. The performance is a graceful one, lacking some of the sweetness of Straram's, but gaining by an incisiveness missing in the other. Label credit is given to the excellent soloists: the violinist whose dextrous fiddling is so marked a feature of the dance of the tailors' apprentices (side 3) and the courante (side 4), and the 'cellist who plays the sentimental episode in the Dinner section (side 8). The recording is exceedingly clean cut, reproducing in miniature the merits of Strauss' own versions of *Don Juan* and *Till* issued here by Brunswick some time ago—and still a model of phonographic Straussiana. The writing for small orchestra is exceedingly adept, and the piquant play of timbres—especially in the ingeniously contrasting episodes of the Cleonte scene—come off beautifully. Only once does the recording director slip up: the over-forceful entrance of the first horn in the Intermezzo (side 6).

I differ with R. H. S. P. on the merits of the music itself. Sentimental it is, but consciously so and charmingly old-fashioned, animated frequently with a deftness and gaiety that recall moments in *Till Eulenspiegel*. The final scene—the Dinner—is brilliantly conceived; the first and second are infectiously vivacious; the reminiscences of Lully properly stately and gracious. Not great music, and often a trifle heavy in the German style for all its lack of pretentiousness. R. H. S. P. accuses it of not being like Gilbert and Sullivan or Johann Strauss, but why should it possess either British or Viennese qualities? If it partakes considerably of so-called German stolidity, it is far from lacking in honest German sentiment, ingenuity, and charm.

The arrangement of the numbers is as follows: Overture (side 1), Menuet and Fencing Master (2), Entrance and Dance of the Tailors (3), Menuet of Lully and Courante (4), Entrance of Cleonte (after Lully) (5), Prelude to the 2nd Act—Intermezzo (6), the Dinner (7, 8, and 9). The recording is complete according to the Philharmonia miniature score. The accompanying leaflet is concise, informative, and interesting—all that an album set annotation should be.

The *Valse d'Amour* on the tenth record side is an addition to the slight list of Reger recordings and a strong proof of this pseudo-Beethoven's inherent lack of genius. It appears to date from the years when he had recognized the frigidity of the highly cerebral works of his earlier years, and was attempting to write more sensuously. The result is a lush moment musically interesting only for its rich orchestration and fine recording. One turns from this honeyed echo of a Viennese waltz to the keener, less muscle-bound measures of Strauss' sturdy, sensitive Bürger.

## Quintessence of Sibelius' Lyricism

SIBELIUS: *The Swan of Tuonela*, Op. 22, played by the PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA conducted by LEOPOLD STOKOWSKI. Victor 7380 (D12, \$2.00). (This, like the Mousorgsky-Ravel *Pictures at an Exhibition* reviewed elsewhere in this issue, is a special Metropolitan release. It will be given National release in the regular Victor supplement of April 24th.)



Sibelius' opus 22 comprised two short orchestral pieces, subtitled "Legends:" The Swan of Tuonela and Lemminkäinen's Homefaring. I believe that the complete set consisted of four pieces, of which the Swan is the third. Like *En Saga* and many other of Sibelius' compositions these were inspired by tales in the great Finnish epic, *The Kalevala*. Tuonela, as a note on the flyleaf of the present score sets forth, is the Kingdom of Death, the Hades of Finnish mythology. It is surrounded by a broad river of black water and rapid current, in which the Swan of Tuonela glides in majestic fashion and sings. Sibelius' music is a brief *Andante molto sostenuto* in A minor, nine-four measure, scored for an orchestra of very moderate size. Arthur Shepherd's description is the finest I have seen:

"The inherent power of Sibelius' music cannot be truly apprehended without giving due consideration to his continence in instrumentation. . . . His essays in impressionism have not tempted him into an enlargement of his instrumental resources. Thus, in *The Swan of Tuonela*, the tonal *mise en scene* is small, the form concise; the color-scheme almost monotone, but luminous. The point of contrast rests chiefly between the divided strings and low wood-winds, with the solo English Horn as protagonist, singing 'the strange wild song of the bird swimming on the black waters, which separate man from Hades.' The brass remains silent for many measures, when midway in the piece the muted horns echo the cadence of the Swan Song, with telling effect, and near the end the horns and trombones sustain the tonic harmony while all the strings take up the cantilena—*con gran suona*. The English Horn continues the song, while the strings—still on the tonic harmony with a fourteen part *divisi*—suggest the flapping of wings, with reiterated strokes of the wooden part of the bow on the strings, *col legno*. The poem closes with a final lyrical out-cry in the strings, subsiding into soft diminuendo and an ascending phrase in the solo violoncello."

One surveys in the symphonies the full panorama of Sibelius' greathearted art, but in this fleeting, nostalgic poem there is distilled the quintessence of his lyricism. Remembering the multitudinous and insignificant shorter compositions by, but not of, Sibelius, one cherishes the Swan as a rare but happy testimony that the large orchestral canvasses are not exclusively the medium of Sibelius' most precious utterance.

Professor Kajanus has set a lofty standard for all future Sibelius recordings to measure up to, but Stokowski's performance of the Swan is not found wanting. It is as matchless as the best of the Bach recordings with which he has enriched the phonographic repertory. The luminous and buoyant tone of the strings, the poetic eloquence of the English Horn, the rich blend of brass and wood wind color are an audible signature that makes the printed label quite superfluous. None but the Philadelphians could lay claim to this disc. R. D. D.

## Moussorgsky – Ravel – Koussevitzky

MOUSSORGSKY (orch. RAVEL): *Pictures at an Exhibition*, 7 sides, and DEBUSSY (orch. RAVEL). *Sarabande*, 1 side, played by the BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, conducted by SERGE KOUSSEVITZKY. Victor Masterpiece Set M-102. (4 D12s, Alb., \$8.00). Special Metropolitan Release.

The story attending the composition of these fascinating pieces is so important that some mention of it cannot be omitted. Moussorgsky's intimate friend Victor Hartmann, a promising architect, died in 1873. The next year, Stassov, who had made a third in the group, and to whom Moussorgsky eventually dedicated this set of compositions, put on an exhibition of his dead friend's sketches and water colors. It was in the nature of a tribute that Moussorgsky, selecting ten of the pictures, undertook to transmute them into music—not in the form of impressions, but as themselves actual musical "pictures."

For adding to the still very slim list of Moussorgsky's works the Victor Company deserves the most signal and materially evidenced gratitude. Apparently it is, however, an unalterable decree of fate that we shall never have any of his music in its original and un-"improved" form. Yet I must confess that it seems to me that if there ever was an excuse for an orchestration it is here. It was at the suggestion of Koussevitzky himself that Ravel made the present

version for performance in 1923. For some time, the publishers Bessel refused permission to play them to any but Koussevitzky, but fairly recently that prohibition has evidently been relaxed, and their performance by the New York Philharmonic produced a decided sensation. Ravel's is not the only orchestral setting, however; one was made in Russia as early as 1891, Sir Henry Wood did another, and finally one was produced in Paris under the auspices of the publishers themselves. But none of these can be worth considering after this masterpiece by Ravel, who should certainly be an experienced hand at such a job, since oddly enough, almost everyone of his important works has started as a piano piece, and only later been arranged by him for orchestra. Cecil Gray, who, to be sure, is not an especial admirer of this composer, even goes so far as to say that this present orchestration is in many ways his most satisfactory work. Never having heard the original piano pieces played, I cannot say how well they sound on that instrument, but it is almost impossible to disassociate the music from its supremely brilliant orchestration, which, nevertheless, never impresses for itself alone, but always manages to convey the impression that the musical idea and its orchestral setting were born simultaneously.

While the work is perhaps most remarkable as an example of Moussorgsky's supreme genius for the realistic delineation of characters and situations, this fact should not lead one to overlook the excellence of its structure from a purely musical standpoint. It is scarcely necessary to lay any stress on the perfect vividness of the "Gnomes," "Bydlo," "Goldenberg and Shmuylo," "The Market-place," or in fact any and all of them, but the artistic unity achieved by the "Promenades" is unusual in such a series of pictures. Moussorgsky himself expressed his pride in the "Promenade" there, and well he might,—once heard, it continues for a long time, to fascinate one by its splendidly rhythmic nature. In varied forms, it is interspersed between several of the numbers "portraying," as Stassov says, "the composer walking now right, now left, now as an idle person, now urged to go near a picture," furthermore besides appearing by chance here and there in the substance of the pictures themselves, it serves, in a de-rhythmed form as the basis of number VII, "The Catacombs," and is finally developed into a splendid peroration to the whole in the "Grande Porte de Kiev."

From every standpoint, this seems to me perhaps the most perfect of the Boston Symphony Orchestra's releases. Koussevitzky makes an ideal choice as conductor of this music, the orchestration of which was a result of his admiration. We find the same genius for strongly marked and essentially Russian rhythms which makes his conducting of *Petrouchka* so unapproachable. On the other hand, he is equally effective in the skimming lightness of the "Tuleries" or the "Limoges." In addition, the "Grande Porte de Kiev" is endowed with unbelievable breadth and sonority, which make it in the highest degree effective; although for this very reason one must not try to experience this effectiveness too frequently, or one will find that his emotions will no longer rise to meet it. Finally, one must praise the fidelity of the recording which enables us to appreciate the admirable playing of the orchestra. It is true to the most delicate *timbres* of the trumpet or to the massed splendours of the whole brass choir.

The Debussy number is the second of three pieces "Pour le Piano," dated 1901. The delicacy and lack of variety of the music itself make one more conscious of this version as a study in orchestral colouring than in the case of the Moussorgsky; moreover, the extreme felicity of Debussy's usual writing for the piano, make it seem rather tasteless to orchestrate where he did not himself see fit to do so. Koussevitzky plays the dance with an appropriate delicate gravity.

ROBERT H. S. PHILLIPS

## Errata

Two errors appearing in the March P. M. R. should be corrected. The Christian name of Vines, the French pianist recording for French Columbia, is properly Ricardo—not Richard, as it appeared in several places. The Köchel number of the Mozart Mass in C minor (from which Hedwig von Deibick's record of "Et Incarnatus Est" was reviewed by K. B. M.) is correctly K. 427.





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### Gems From Former Releases

Interest in new recordings sometimes obscures the excellence of many recordings previously issued. Below we list a few of the outstanding among these.

+ + +

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Sieber, Chorus, of Berlin, with Orchestra

2393-D { Salut D'Amour (Love's Greeting) (Elgar) Instrumental  
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Minuet Sicilienne (Squire and Hart) Instrumental  
J. H. Squire Celeste Octet

2411-D { Hearts and Flowers (Tobani) Instrumental  
10 inch, 75c { Plaza Theatre Orchestra Conducted by Frank Tours  
A Children's Suite—The Fairy Doll (Ansell)  
Instrumental Columbia Concert Orchestra

G-50281-D\* { Voices of Spring—Waltz (Johann Strauss)  
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Fox Trots Guy Lombardo and His Royal Canadians

2400-D { Love for Sale (from "The New Yorkers")  
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Fox Trots Ben Selvin and His Orchestra

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Ted Wallace and His Campus Boys

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Wabash Moon Waltzes The Cavaliers (Waltz Artists)

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10 inch, 75c { Were You Sincere?  
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## Cassado's Debussy Sonata

DEBUSSY: *Sonata for Violoncello and Piano*, (Prologue-Serenade-Finale), played by GASPARD CASSADO and MME. G. VON MENDELSSOHN-GORDIGIANI. (On the fourth side Cassado plays an original Spanish Dance—*Aragonesa*.) COLUMBIA 67895-6-D (2 D12s, \$1.50 each).

Columbia has been almost too generous with the first of Debussy's three sonatas. Not content with one excellent version, that by Maréchal and Casadesus for French Columbia, the American company now releases another, of equal if strongly contrasting merit. Maréchal and Cassado have only their instrument and musicianship in common; their styles are as different as day from night. As noted in the review of the former's version (page 169, February issue), it is played with tremendous bravura, even bravado,—a tremendously dynamic and impressive performance and recording. In comparison Cassado and Mendelssohn-Gordigiani's playing is conservative, almost subdued. But it attains distinctive individuality of its own on re-hearing. Within its own definitely set scheme it is well planned and delicately poised. The recording itself is doubtlessly practically the same, but naturally sounds much less sensational. Cassado's tone is less plangent, more smoothly rounded, and less individual than Maréchal's. His conception of the music is the reverse of the athleticism the latter finds in it. Cassado's Debussy is more the Debussy of the earlier and more famous works, more poetical, less exuberant. It is not as exciting, but quite possibly it will wear better. At all events between the two readings we gain a vastly keener insight into the later Debussy than through either alone.

Cassado is a pupil and compatriot of Casals, whose art he resembles in miniature. He has something of Casals' refinement of execution, but as yet, hardly the latter's breadth or firmness of grasp. His own piece makes an acceptable filler-in, not as amusing as Caplet's vivacious *Danse des petits nègres* on the odd side of the Maréchal set, but a jaunty tune, not too assertively Iberian. R. D. D.

## Victor Herbert

VICTOR HERBERT: *Favorite Melodies*—Volume 2, played by the VICTOR SALON ORCHESTRA and SALON GROUP under the direction of NATHANIEL SHILKRET. VICTOR Concert Album Set C-11 (D12s, Alb., \$7.50).

This second group of Victor Herbert melodies is arranged as follows: Side 1—*Pan Americana*. One of the familiar orchestral numbers played with requisite gusto.

Side 2—Selections from the operetta, *Algeria*, later known as the *Rose of Algeria*: Characteristic melodies from an operetta which has become better known by radio performances.

Side 3—*Yesterthoughts* and *Punchinello*: Two shorter salon pieces which will be readily recognized.

Side 4—Selections from *Hearts of Erin*, renamed *Eileen* immediately after the opening. One of Herbert's most successful operettas using Irish melodies.

Side 5—Selections from the *Only Girl*: One of the finest scores the composer ever wrote. Wilda Bennett, Adele Rowland and Ernest Torrence were in this. Patsy's dashing military song is omitted from the record unfortunately. You will search far and not find a more beautiful melody than "When You're Away."

Side 6—Selections from *Babette*: Who remembers this one? The delightful music from this forgotten operetta makes one wonder if there aren't others as charming.

Side 7—*Fleurette* and *Under the Elms*: Two more salon pieces.

Side 8—Selections from the *Princess Pat*: Eleanor Painter's famous success—You'll remember the Neapolitan Love Song.

Side 9—Land of My Own Romance from the *Enchantress*: This was the operetta in which Kitty Gordon reminded the critics of Mary Garden and in which she wore her famous cloth of gold gown, the first in this country. The company, afterwards stranded, was one of the causes of the Equity strike.

(b) Serenade from the 'Cello Suite, Movement 4: The composer remembers his career as a noted solo 'cellist to write a delightful number.

(c) Absinthe Frappé from *It Happened in Nordland*: Lew Fields' great success. Another number kept familiar by radio performances. Marie Cahill make her famous exit from the cast in the last New York performance.

Side 10.—Selections from *Natoma*: Habanera-Vaquero's song—*Natoma's Theme*—*Dagger Dance-Finale*: Interesting revival of some of the most viable music of this semi-successful opera. The melodies will all be recognized, if not already known by name. Mary Garden was the vivid heroine of the première, taking place in Philadelphia, February 28, 1911. The opera was handicapped by a static libretto and the two leading characters other than the title role, Barbara and Paul (John McCormack was the dashing young officer) were too conventionally light-operative to be useful in the more serious field of grand opera.

The present passages are taken however from moments where Herbert did not attempt to be too heavy-footed with his music and it is extremely effective as well as genuinely melodious. The appearance of the *Natoma* theme brings to mind his use of the leit-motive which he employed with varying success. The vivid *Dagger Dance*, one of the best moments in the opera, was recorded in the acoustical days under Herbert's own direction.

The present set supplements ably a previous group of more familiar melodies which was a best-seller. In this case the better known are skillfully interspersed with those less well-known, but even if you don't know what they're from, you'll recognize them.

It is not necessary to comment here upon the ageless melodies of Victor Herbert which have gained a new and wholly deserved popularity since the composer's death. Some of his almost forgotten operettas have gained a new lease of life with the advent of radio. His excursions into grand opera were never as successful as his other ventures because he took the form too seriously, but I am inclined to think that a revival of *Natoma* today might bring quite a few surprises.

Of the performance there is nothing but praise. The orchestral and vocal interludes are excellently distributed and contrasted and the musicianship and comprehensive understanding of Nathaniel Shilkret dominate the entire proceeding.

RICHARDSON BROWN

## Dial System for Phono-Radios

THE engineering products division of the RCA-Victor Company has not been content to rest long on the laurels of its invention of the musical speaker-pillow described on page 152 of the February P. M. R. Its latest brain-child is an ingenious application of the dialing system, rapidly being put in use in telephone communication, to remote control of combination phonograph-radios. This simple dial control mounted on a small ornamental box with a pilot light, may be installed at desirable locations throughout a house, and is connected to a master phono-radio outfit located in the attic or basement. Complete operating control of both the radio and automatic phonograph is provided by each dial station.

Up to eighteen broadcasting stations are pretuned and adjusted to the master dial unit to respond to easy code number combinations—conveniently listed in the lid of each control box. The automatic phonograph is similarly adjusted for each of its functions. To bring in a radio program to one of the rooms, the dial is twirled to the proper code number. Another code number is dialed to raise or lower the volume, start or stop the broadcast music, or to play records or reject them at will. The volume of each loudspeaker outlet may be separately regulated by any of the dial controls. For example, one dials 411 to start the automatic phonograph, then 34-1 to broadcast the music in the master's bedroom. Or one may bring in station WEA, say, by dialing 14, and broadcast the music in the library by dialing 36-1. The volume control is obtained by holding the digit 1 against the end-stop of the dial until the desired volume is reached, whereupon the dial is released and the music continues at that volume until again adjusted.

Simple—in truth, but miraculously convenient, and an important step in the radio-phonograph's development as an inherent musical instrument for the home or public building.



## Cavalleria Rusticana



Mascagni

(Caricature by Dr. Ricardo Alemán)

MASCAGNI: *Cavalleria Rusticana* (from the famous play of Giovanni Verga) sung by famous artists and the chorus and orchestra of LA SCALA, MILAN under the direction of CARLO SABAJNO. VICTOR Musical Masterpiece Set M 98 (9 D12s, Alb., \$13.50).

Santuzza .....	Delia Sanzio
Lola .....	M. Pantaleoni
Turiddu .....	Giovanni Breviario
Alfio .....	Piero Biasini
Mamma Lucia .....	Olga de Franco
Conductor, Carlo Sabajno	

It would be interesting to speculate on the question of whether the Sonzogno could have had any idea of the far-reaching results of their 1890 contest for an original opera. Could they have foreseen that a humble baker's son would write an opera in eight days that would be heard round the world, to form an inseparable part of every operatic repertoire worthy of the name, which would start the universe writing imitation slice-of-life creations without success (except in one instance, *Pagliacci*, in no way as fine a work)? Mascagni has pursued the phantom of the furore to this day but in vain. Echoes of it are numerous. Only this year the Chicago Company revived Massenet's one act shocker *La Navarraise* which he wrote for Calvé, in an attempt to give her another role as effective as Santuzza in which she made one of her deepest impressions. Mary Garden was the tortured Anita of the current revival and her radiant histrionism made memorable a role far too low for her vocal means. Puccini tried the lustful horrors of *Il Tabarro*, but the modern operatic audience doesn't want to have its blood curdled even with *Bohème* sprinkled through for atmosphere.

There are many Santuzzas today, but great ones are rare. Raisa used to create vivid illusion when her magnificent voice was in its prime. Jeritza still electrifies with her athletic Siciliana, but these instances are unusual, although the beauty of the music often carries a performance along of its own momentum. The Siciliana still retains elements of novelty. The Easter Hymn rarely fails of its effect and the Intermezzo with its excellent theatrical contrast. In fact the phonograph is the ideal way to hear it, for at the Metropolitan the music-loving Italians who applaud nightly always use it for a recreational period and talk and chatter through the softer passages and are occasionally silent in the louder ones.

All these points are true in the present version. The lack of action is most felt in the passages where there is the most of it. A truism you will say, but those familiar with other sets will understand what I mean. The concentrated intensity

in the scene before the church steps is lost. Little hint of the violent struggle both physical and mental, transpiring there is conveyed. Lola's vibrato must have shocked Turiddu rather than charmed him and Santuzza is something of a shrew. Mamma Lucia makes the term mother-in-law seem justified and you don't much care about either of the males. Alfio is more of a braggart than ever and Turiddu a weakling with high notes. The usually excellent balance between chorus and orchestra is not maintained and the solo voices seem too far forward when united with these forces.

I should like to be able to say that the orchestra saves the whole. Only Sabajno's superlative performances in the past causes this one to suffer by comparison. Unfortunately a routine performance in the opera house is a mediocre one on records. Acting won't do with Cavalleria. You have to sing every inch of the way!

MASCAGNI: *Cavalleria Rusticana*, complete opera, sung by artists, chorus, and orchestra of LA SCALA, MILAN. COLUMBIA Operatic Series No. 7 (10 D12s, Alb., \$15.00).

Santuzza .....	Giannina Arangi-Lombardi
Lola .....	Maria Castagna
Turiddu .....	Antonio Melandri
Alfio .....	Gino Lulli
Lucia .....	Ida Mannarini

Conductor, Lorenzo Molajoli

Choral conductor, Vittore Veneziani

I have just been listening to the white label samples of the above mentioned records, which arrived too late for detailed comment this month. I commend them to the music-lovers who still thrill at the melodious dramatics of Mascagni's one-act tragedy. This cursory examination shows that the drama is inherent in the singer's tones and their characters, well-known from countless rehearsals of the opera will stand out from the discs just as they did in the same company's *Tosca* a month or two ago. The orchestra supports them and swings them along to the effectively terse finale which is one of the strongest points in the music and the one which most successfully underscores the Verga story. There will be a more detailed criticism next month.

RICHARDSON BROWN

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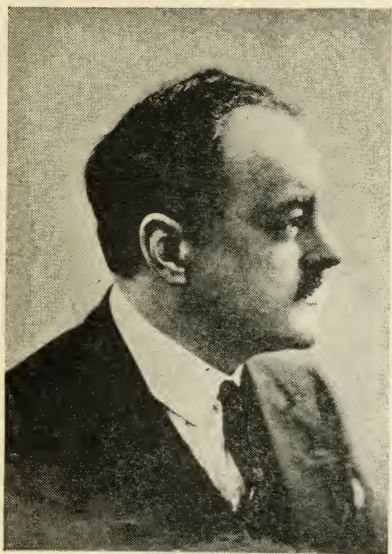
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RIO DE JANEIRO BRAZIL



## ORCHESTRA



Albert Wolff

MENDELSSOHN: *Midsummer Night's Dream*—Overture, (3 sides), played by the PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA, BERLIN, conducted by WILHELM FURTWÄNGLER; and *La Fileuse*, (1 side), played by the ORCHESTRA DE L'ASSOCIATION DES CONCERTS LAMOUREUX, conducted by ALBERT WOLFF. BRUNSWICK 90137-8. (2 D12s, \$1.50 each).

By report and by a few previous glimpses I had been prepared for some great things from Furtwängler, but surely no one could have expected more than is given us by these discs. A happy combination of the various factors concerned enables one to understand why it was that, on its visits, Paris always considered the Berlin Philharmonic, under its own leader, the finest orchestra it had ever heard. One can also see the qualities which might in other circumstances and music develop into grounds for the English complaints about Furtwängler's machine-like precision, his exaggerated contrasts of *piano* and *forte*, slow and fast. In this case, however, the means are completely justified by the greatly enhanced effectiveness of the music.

This overture for all its astonishing precocity, is apt no longer to impress us in an imperfect performance. But here the opening and recurring section for violins is played with a most extreme delicacy and airiness, which make it a pleasure to listen to. The light *pizzicati* in the second violins and violas are emphasized just sufficiently to be audible. On the other hand, the *tutti* passages are infused with a compelling brilliance and vivacity. The height of perfection is reached in the last few pages, where, the absolute purity and clarity notwithstanding, all is played really *ppp*, and the beautiful legato phrasing and sweep of the instrumental line are such as to leave one breathless, and marvelling. How much the miraculous exactitude of the recording helps in the impression can scarcely be calculated. The amazing fragility of the strings *piano* would have been impossible to transmit without it; or notice how sharp are the *pp* notes of the woodwinds on part two. A *tour de force* in every respect, it must be admitted, but the result is one to be placed among one's masterpieces of recording.

The orchestration of the familiar *Spinning Song* on side four, is an example of Wolff's magical skill with trifles, recorded with more than usual excellence.

MENDELSSOHN: *Midsummer Night's Dream*—Wedding March, and Scherzo, played by a SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA conducted by DR. WEISSMANN. COLUMBIA G50280-D (D12, \$1.25).

The March is given a performance which although slightly blatant and bombastic, is grandly impressive. The Scherzo, however, requires more lightness and deftness—without which

it is scarcely interesting. The recording of both pieces is very brilliant, perhaps more appropriate to the first than to the second.

BRAHMS: *Academic Festival Overture*, op. 80, three sides, and *Symphony No. 1*—Third movement, played by the CONCERTGEBOUW ORCHESTRA, AMSTERDAM, conducted by WILLEM MENGELBERG. COLUMBIA 67893-4-D (2 D12s, \$2.00 each).

Columbia seems to have been going in for editions of this overture in a large way—beginning with the ancient and in many ways unapproachable Harty record. For their most recent issue, Mengelberg might seem a somewhat unexpected choice but he makes a case for himself. A comparison with the last Columbia release of this work, conducted by Dr. Stiedry, makes a criticism easier. They keynote of this latter throughout is a lusty and good-humoured vigorousness, without too much regard for details. Mengelberg, on the other hand, with his decidedly slower tempo, gives the work a much more thorough musical exploration. Undoubtedly he finds or accentuates many worthy details which would be lost in a more rapid and less musicianly performance. But it seems to me that to a certain extent at least, the more boisterous the performance the more successful it will be; this is not so say that Mengelberg is lacking in energy, as I scarcely need to say, but as a rule that energy, though forceful is not quite jolly enough. I must make an exception for the manner in which the "Foxsong" is introduced on part two (oddly enough, it is just at this point that Dr. Stiedry's vigour seems to desert him for a while). Perhaps the best description of Mengelberg's interpretation may be gathered from a few scattered sentences which I find quoted from Walter Niemann's book on Brahms. He says that the overture is "the half-sad, half solemn retrospect of a mature man looking back over his own vanished youth . . . rather than an exuberant, boisterous piece of student life in the present. This is at once evident from the significant stress laid upon its meditative parts (upon which Mengelberg likewise lays stress), which in the whole of the first third seem to force themselves to take a humorous turn by an effort." I need say no more; after reading this quotation everyone should be able to decide whether he wants this distinctive version or not.

The C Minor symphony movement makes an interesting addition to the set. As frequently, however, there seems to be some difficulty in presenting its *grazioso* side. The opening and closing sections are agreeably light and serene, but the central portion attains an intensity which is more than mere gaiety and is rather out of keeping with the rest of the picture. Felicitous little details such as the flute on the repetition of the first theme are brought out, however.

STRAUSS, RICHARD: *Der Rosenkavalier*—Waltzes. Played by the BERLIN PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA, conducted by BRUNO WALTHER. COLUMBIA 67892-D (D12, \$2.00).

After the enthusiastic mention of this record at the end of Mr. Levy's "Paris Letter," I looked forward to it with the greatest interest. The actuality certainly justifies all praise. Any previous versions of the music are automatically put out of the running. Walther wins our admiration here by his lightness of touch and by his rhythmic subtlety, as a result of which every *rubato* is taken advantage of, but never to the point of exaggeration, and the whole is made to "flow" (for want of a better word) in a manner peculiarly sinuous and fascinating. Remembering the encomia heaped both London and Paris on Walther's direction of the *Fledermaus*, and reinforcing it with this evidence, one longs more than ever to hear him do some Strauss—*Johann* this time.

The recording, capturing to perfection the beautiful playing of the Berlin Philharmonic, is among the most lucid I have ever heard. There is not the slightest cloudiness in any detail or register—also it is neither heavy nor unduly brilliant. In addition it has that peculiar "stereoscopic" quality which Columbia frequently achieves—one can visualize exactly the relative distances and positions of each instrument as if it were right out in the room.

R. H. S. P.

GRAINGER (ART. SCHMID): *Over the Hills and Far Away*, and *Colonial Song*, played by the VICTOR SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, conducted by ROSARIO BOURDON. VICTOR 36035 D12, \$1.25.)



The Victor house orchestra has been heard so little on recent discs that it is a pleasure to find it back again in characteristic form. Over the Hills and Far Away is a "Children's March," familiar in piano versions. I believe it is the piece that Grainger once recorded on a piano roll in a six-hand performance—all played by himself. It is a good buoyant tune, orchestrated here to good effect by Schmid and played with fine alertness and snap by Bourdon. The Colonial Song is a lush morceau, and like most of Gershwin's music that woos the melodic rather than the rhythmic muse its appeal is largely sentimental. There already is a version conducted by the composer for Columbia, employing the original orchestration which calls for voices singing wordless syllables, but the purely orchestral version played here is effective, especially in Bourdon's restrained handling.

## INSTRUMENTAL

### Piano

LISZT: *Paraphrase on the Quartet from Verdi's Rigoletto*, played by IRENE SCHARRER. COLUMBIA 2395-D (D10, 75c).

The Lisztian paraphrases, once so important on recital programs, are heard less and less frequently today. It is surprising and rather pleasant to find that they have by no means lost all their pristine color and fire when played with the proper bravado. Irene Scharrer plays the present fantasy on the Rigoletto Quartet with fitting breadth and dash: an effective bit of recorded virtuosity. I believe that this is her first disc to be released in this country, although collectors have long been familiar with her H. M. V. series, made before she went over to Columbia. Judging by the brightness and contour of her piano as recorded here, recorded pianism stands to gain much by her future releases.

### Violin

COUPERIN (arr. KREISLER): *Chanson Louis XIII et Pavane* and *La Precieuse*. VICTOR 1503 (D10, \$1.50).

DE FALLA: *Jota*, and GLAZOUNOW (arr. KREISLER): *Serenade Espagnole*. VICTOR 1504 (D10, \$1.50).

Both played by FRITZ KREISLER with piano accompaniments by MICHAEL RAUCHEISEN.

The Chanson Louis XIII et Pavane is a re-recording of the acoustical version on Victor 713. The others are here recorded by Kreisler for the first time I believe. There have been other versions: La Precieuse (in Kreisler's arrangement) by Morini for Polydor; the Jota in a variety of vocal and violin recordings; the Sérénade Espagnole by Salmond, the 'cellist, for Columbia.

It is a pleasure to get so generous a batch of Kreisler performances, all of apt and interesting material. Students of interpretative style could do well to examine the slight but significant differences in Kreisler's approach to the gracious delicacy of Couperin and the more dynamic delicacy of the Spanish rhythms of De Falla and Glazounow. Need one add that each piece is tossed off with the lightness of touch and tonal refinement that are inimitably Kreisler's? There is no thickening of the graceful melodic lines, no blurring of the light dance rhythms. Altogether as delightful a musical bouquet as we have had from Kreisler in several years.

(See also the violin recordings by Leon Zighera (Decca) mentioned in the article on "Two Brothers Zighera.")

### Violoncello

GRANADOS: *Goyescas—Intermezzo*, and BACH: *Arioso*, played by FELIX SALMOND, with piano accompaniments by HARRY KAUFMAN. COLUMBIA 50269-D (D12, \$1.25).

A new Salmond idiosyncrasy is always to be greeted warmly, and the present pieces give convincing exposition to his familiar talents. The firmness and vibrancy of his tone are augmented here by unusually forthright vigor. I prefer the orchestral

version of the Goyescas intermezzo, but Salmond's is one of the best solo recordings. The Bach air, serious, manly, ineffably eloquent, finds the 'cello a perfect medium. Only the finest voice and most musicianly singing could even hope to equal the expansive and yet restrained warmth of Salmond's playing here.

DE FALLA: *Suite Populaire Espagnole—El Pano Moruno, Nan* (Berceuse), *Asturiana, Jota*, played by MAURICE MARECHAL with piano accompaniments by MAURICE FAURE. COLUMBIA 50278-D (D12, \$1.25).

The pieces Maréchal plays here are respectively Nos. 1, 2, 5, and 6 from the Suite Populaire Espagnole. A table showing the various vocal and instrumental recordings of the six pieces comprising this suite was printed on page 187 of the March 1930 P.M.R. Maréchal is a first rate French 'cellist, whose version of the Debussy 'cello sonata was reviewed in the February 1931 P.M.R. He plays here with the same intensity as in the Debussy work. It is interesting to contrast the violence of reading of the Jota with the politer, more polished performance of Kreisler's. But Maréchal never exceeds legitimate dynamic bounds, and the strong recording catches the full fresh forcefulness of his playing. Other 'cellists excell him in tone quality, especially in the upper registers of the instrument, but none commands more vigor and spontaneity, or is more exhilarating to hear.

### Harp

GRANADOS: (arr. ZIGHERA). *Danza Espanola—Andaluza*, and TOURNIER: *Vers la source dans le bois*, played by BERNARD ZIGHERA. COLUMBIA 2394-D (D10, 75c).

This is the first harp recording we have had from Columbia since the electrical era; indeed, I believe it is the first electrical recording to be made in this country by a distinguished harpist in authentic music for the instrument. All honor to the recording director for a brilliant solution of a difficult problem in his art-science. Mr. Zighera tells me that several hours of experimentation were necessary before the desired results could be secured. The ordinary pedestal type of microphone, no matter where placed, emphasized the lower register unduly and picked up many of the extraneous vibrations and noises incidental to harp playing. A suspended mike above and just to the rear of the player's head, was finally hit upon, and the resulting recording is more faithful to the instrument's tone colors over the entire register than I have yet heard. The pieces are slight, but far from insignificant. The Granados Andaluza is the most popular of the Spanish Dances—No. 5 of the complete set, and Mr. Zighera has arranged it in unpretentious and effective fashion. Marcel Tournier (whose pupil Mr. Zighera was) is a noted French harpist and composer. His *Vers la source dans le bois* is a charming miniature tone poem, neatly revealing the instrument's and player's capabilities; its scintillant tonal chiaroscuro is an integral part of the work, not the meaningless embroidery draped lavishly on simple melodies in the transcriptions that to date have formed the major part of the small repertory of recorded harp music.

Additional notes on Mr. Zighera and his talented family are published elsewhere in this issue under the heading, "The Brothers Zighera."

*The Last Rose of Summer*, and *Annie Laurie*, played by JOHN COCKERILL, with orchestral accompaniments. VICTOR (International list) V-62 (D10, 75c).

Florid arrangements, "with variations," for solo harp and discreet chamber orchestral accompaniments. The instrument's capabilities are shown off well enough, albeit in old-fashioned manner, and the recording is fair.

TOURNIER: *Etude de Concert—Au Matin*, and HASSELMAN: *Prrière*, played by PIERRE JAMET. PATHE V-9939 (D10). Available through the American Importers.

In this IRA importation there are no distracting accompaniments, and the harp's tone colors show to better advantage in the recording. The pieces themselves while quite elaborate are of small musical consequence, although pleasant enough to listen to. The harpist, soloist with the "Concerts Colonne a Lamoureux" is obviously worthy of more significant fare than provided here.

O. C. O.



## OPERATIC

MOZART: *Il Seraglio*—"Che Pur Aspro al Coro," sung in German by FELICE HUNI-MIHACEK, with orchestral accompaniment conducted by J. HEIDENREICH. BRUNSWICK 90139 (D12, \$1.50).

Still another excellent record of a Mozart aria sung by Huni-Mihacek marks the new Brunswick list. In this, as in the others, good recording reveals a lovely voice and lovely music. The aria, more familiar by its German title "Märtern aller Arten," is in the opera sung by Constanze, asserting her determination to suffer tortures or death rather than yield where she does not love. The warmth and color of the voice are admirable in this record—the dramatic quality appears at once if the words are followed as the record is played. It is a pity that the long but charming orchestral introduction to the aria is almost completely omitted in this recording. It is included in an Electrola disc, sung by Maria Nemeth, in which the rendering is less dramatic and the voice harder, but in which the clarity of the whole effect is perhaps greater than in this Brunswick version. The Electrola record, though, is less easily available, and for most hearers the Brunswick, because of the quality of the voice, will prove more satisfactory. It is a worthy addition to the splendid list of Polydor repressings which Brunswick has offered American buyers in the past few months. K. B. M.

BIZET: *Pearl Fishers*—*De mon amie, fleur endormie*, and MASSENET: *Werther*—*Le lied d'Ossian*, sung in French by JOSEPH ROGATCHEWSKY, with orchestral accompaniments. COLUMBIA 2410-D (D10 75c).

A gloriously beautiful tenor voice sings arias from two semi-familiar French operas. The pseudo orientalism of the Bizet aria is an excellent contrast to the romantic style of Massenet in one of his most charming operas. Rogatschewsky gives one a legitimate thrill by his singing and it is a pleasure to call attention to it.

## SONGS

ROTTE-JURMAN: *Deine Mutter Bleibt Immer Bei Dir*, and KROME-ROTTE: *Ubers Meer Grüss Ich Dich Heimatland*, from the Sound-Film "Das Dimenlied," sung in German by RICHARD TAUBER with accompaniments by the DAJOS BELA KUNSTLER ORCHESTRA. COLUMBIA (German list) G-55230-D (D12, \$1.25).

Two songs in popular vein similar to numbers from the reigning success *Zwei Herzen in ¾ Takt*. Tauber is at his best with the inspiring background of Dajos Bela's fine concert orchestra.

HUGO WOLF: *Biterolf* and *Der Tambour*, sung in German by HEINRICH SCHLUSNUS, with piano accompaniments by FRANZ RUPP. BRUNSWICK 85000 (D10, \$1.25).

The heavy foundation rhythm of *Biterolf*, the song, indicates the basic strength of soul of *Biterolf*, the man. Each phrase of the accompaniment carries out the slightest nuance of feeling expressed in the poem and in the vocal line itself. *Der Tambour* (The Drummer) is one of Wolf's songs in lighter vein. It is a little tone picture showing the dream of an army drummer set in the frame of one humorous motive. As the dream grows he begins to believe in it, but as he sinks back to sleep again its unsubstantiality breaks in upon him as he dreamily reiterates the last phrase.

The two songs are admirably contrasted and afford one more example of the type of interpretation and tonal beauty that have made Heinrich Schlusnus unique in the lieder field. Franz Rupp's accompaniments provide a worthy background.

FRANCK: *Panis Angelicus*, sung in Latin with THEODORA VERSTEEGH, mezzo-soprano; and HANDE: *Ombre Mai Fu* from "Xerxes" (Largo), sung in Italian by VAN YZER-VINCENT, soprano, both with organ and violin accompaniment. COLUMBIA 50282-D (D12 \$1.25).

The contralto aria is sung by the soprano with the unpronounceable name and vice-versa. However, if you can reconcile yourself to the change, the clear sweetly expressive voice of Mlle. Vincent adds an element of novelty to the famous Handel melody, while the darker voice of Mlle. Versteegh adds a new interest to the equally famous one of Franck. Therefore we have that curiosity, a record of hackneyed numbers which is off the beaten track.

## CHORAL

STRAUSS, JOHANN: *Geschichten aus dem Wienerwald*, two parts, sung in German by the SIEBER CHORUS of BERLIN, with orchestra. COLUMBIA G 50279-D. (D12, \$1.25).

I cannot say that I find the vocal arrangements of this waltz in any way superior to the simple orchestral version. The interpretation of the waltz is over-brilliant and somewhat coarse, and the chorus likewise specializes in vigour. The recording is clear, but rather hard.

BARNBY: *When Morning Gilds the Skies*, and F. J. HAYDN: *O Worship the King*, sung by the TRINITY CHOIR with pipe organ accompaniments VICTOR 22626 (D10, 75c).

Two fine hymns sung with familiar enthusiasm and tonal quality by Trinity Choir.

NEWMAN-DYKES: *Lead, Kindly Light* and BONAR-HAYNES: *A Few More Years Shall Roll* sung by the TEMPLE QUARTET with organ accompaniments. COLUMBIA 2412-D (D10, 75c).

The surprisingly clear reproduction of the voices lends a new interest and added value to these excellent versions of well-known hymns.

## Finds from the Columbia export lists

The Columbia International lists of recent months present a rather bewildering array of Italian music, both old and new, trite and unique, by a wide variety of artists.

Place aux dames: we refer to CONCHITA VELASQUEZ who has made several numbers. The aria *Condotta ell'era in ceppi* from *Trovatore* (4125-X), the Gypsy Song and *Seguidilla* from *Carmen*, in the unfamiliar Italian (4124-X) and a coupling of Massenet's *Elegy* and a song by one Ranzato, *L'uome E' fumatore* (a plug for Lucky Strikes?) with 'cello and piano accompaniment (4080-X). Madame is a distinctive artiste. Although her light mezzo-soprano is not adequate for the more robust measures of *Azucenar* nor the suaver *Elegy* but she is most brilliant in the Spanish number and the *Carmen* numbers.

MERCEDES CAPSIR, already familiar to the record public through her coloratura flights in the sets of the Barber and Traviata continues them in routine versions of *Quando rapita* and *Regnava nel silenzio* from *Lucia* (4083-X).

The sole exception to the prevailing Italian mood of these releases is that of MARIA BARRIENTOS as she sings the first three of *De Fallas Sept Chansons Espagnoles* (52079-X) which will be a welcome surprise to her many American admirers. These songs constitute the only time that the composer has quoted literally from the Spanish folk-song. He has, however, made piano accompaniments that are at once highly pianistic and personal to his style, which he, himself, plays on these records with characteristic dash and fire. The first of the songs treats of a rare Moorish cloth which a stain has rendered valueless. The second, a Spanish variation of the proverb that those who live in glass houses etc. Faithlessness is compared to a sixpence worn smooth—ironical—with an exceptionally brilliant accompaniment. The third is a mournful soliloquy dealing with relief from pain and weeping pine trees, etc.

Although it is impossible for a soprano leggiere to encompass the range of tone that the deeper voice of a Conchita Supervia would, nevertheless the present performance is fascinating and Madame Barrientos' voice is extremely lovely. A recording that should not be neglected.

RICHARDSON BROWN





## POPULAR

## Laughter and Whistles

**O**KEH's famous Laughing Record, one of the best sellers in the acoustical days, is back in an electrical version, and again the amachure cornetist holds forth amidst a diaphragm-lifting chorus of guffaws and chuckles (4678). Sheer nonsense, but it may be relished by even the wisest of phonophiles. For good measure Okeh throws in a re-pressing of *Louis Armstrong's* grand record *Blue Turning Grey Over You*. Of quite different type is Brunswick 6054, whereon *Margaret McKee* of radio fame whistles in virtuoso fashion to *Katzman's* suave performances of the *Spring Song* and *Call of the Angelus*.

## Pianos and Guitars

*Arden* and *Ohman* seldom appear nowadays on records without their orchestra. Victor 22608 brings them back in a pair of pianologues, assisted by some modest percussion, in two vivacious tap dances: *Maple Leaf Rag* is pretty fast for amateur dancers, but *Canadian Capers* is bright nola, sharply rhythmed, and with well placed breaks. For Brunswick *Palakiko* and *Paahuhi* strum their Hawaiian guitars in accomplished fashion on two *Di Capua* pieces, the perennial *O Sole Mio* and a less familiar *Maria Mari* (6039).

## Songsters

The *Revelers* and the *Happy Chappies* are alone in the ensemble field, the former with clean cut snappy versions of *Blue Again* and *Lady Play Your Mandoline* (Victor 22622), and the latter in a coupling of Southern sentiment: *Wonder Valley* and *When You Think a Whole Lot About Someone* (Columbia 2392-D).

The best of the soloists are *Libby Homan* and *Ruth Etting*. Libby has fine fare in *Love for Sale* and *I'm One of God's Children*, done in rich style to mellow orchestral accompaniments (Brunswick 6044). Etting appears in characteristic form in *You're the One I Care For* (Columbia 2398-D) and *Reaching for the Moon and Overnight* (2377-D). The coupling on the former disc, *Love is Like That*, is less effective. Close behind is *Ethel Waters*, demonstrating notable talent as a torch balladist in *When Your Lover Has Gone*, and returning to her effective recit. style in *Please Don't Talk About Me* (Columbia 2409-D). Trailing are *Oscar Grogan* in lush versions of *The Kiss That Made a Fool of Me* and *River Ste. Marie*—an insidious tune (Columbia 2407-D); *Harry Richman*, more mellifluous than is his wont, in *When Your Lover Has Gone* and *Just a Gigolo* (Brunswick 6052); *Belle Baker* in lugubrious but lyrical versions of *Overnight* and *You're the One I Care For* (Brunswick 6051); and *Segar Ellis* in suave but sobby versions of *You're the One* and *Tears* (Okeh 41479).

More effective than the above, and sung in brighter fashion, are *Crumit* and *Sanderson's* performance of that dapper ditty, *Would You Like to Take a Walk*, coupled with *Crumit's* solo, in more conventional style, *One Little Raindrop* (Victor 22630).

## DANCE

## Hits from England

**T**HE King's Horses continues among the best sellers and is now available in a flock of varied performances, led by the crisp original British version by *Jack Hylton's* fine orchestra, splendidly recorded, on Victor 22619. *Arden* and *Ohman's* coupling of *Sleepy Town Express* is not so interesting. The best performance by an American band is that by *Fred Rich* for Okeh (41480), coupled with a vigorous reading of *The One Man Band*. The *California Ramblers* do well with a rowdier, novelty version, tied up with a jaunty performance of the *Sleepy Town Express* Columbia (2397-D). The same combination of tunes is played by *Milt Shaw's Detroiters* on Meltone M-12061 (the new low-price disc put out by the Brunswick Company). Here the performances are more on the marche miniature order.

The *Wind in the Willows*, another British importation, is available this month in *Rudy Valée's* hushed crooning, coupled with *Fall in Love With Me* (Victor 22615). *Vallée* shows to better advantage in 99 Out of 100 *Want to be Loved*, featuring his band's fine pianist (22611).

## Cream of the Ballroom Dance Discs

BRUNSWICK: *Emil Coleman* leads with brightly deft performances of the hits from "America's Sweetheart"—We'll be the Same and I've Got \$5.00—attractive songs whose clever lyrics are well handled by Coleman's capable chorister (6036). *Tom Gerun* exhibits characteristic full-voiced playing in *When You're Happy* and *In Love With a Dream* (6057); *Nick Lucas*, besides the disc already mentioned, shows up well in jaunty versions of the latest song hit, *Hello Beautiful*, and *Running Between the Raindrops* (6049); *Jacques Renard* plays suavely in *Reaching for the Moon and Heartaches* (6033), and *With All My Heart*, the latter coupled with Coleman's sentimental *Heavenly Night* waltz (6036).

COLUMBIA: Honors go to the Alpert disc mentioned elsewhere, *Ted Wallace*, and a newcomer—*Henri Gendron*. Wallace turns in an effective, highly danceable arrangement of *One Little Raindrop* and an ingratiating essay in pseudo-Spanish idiom—*Thrill Me* (2413-D); also a very attractive and catchy *I Want You for Myself*, coupled with a less colorful *Lonesome Old Town* (2402-D). Gendron has a tune well out of the ordinary in *Little Joe*, mated with a musicianly performance of *Everything But Love* (2396-D). *Guy Lombardo* displays familiar if unexciting merit in quiet, polished performances of *River Ste. Marie* and *Running Between Raindrops* (2401-D); *Ben Selvin* tosses off *Love For Sale* and the latest re-incarnation of *On the Riviera*—99 Out of 100—in brisk fashion (2400-D); *Ted Lewis* avers *At Last I'm Happy* and *Truly I Love You*, with praise going to the neat orchestral playing at the expense of the rather forced chorus-sing (2408-D); and *Smith Ballew* turns in one of his best performances in a lightly, very catchily treated *I Hate Myself* (2406-D).

OKEH: Best is the *Casa Loma's* gay resurrection of *Put On Your Old Gray Bonnet*, coupled with a more routine version of *Alexander's Ragtime Band* (41476). *Little Did I Know*, by the same band, is done vivaciously, but *Overnight* is cast in conventional mold (41477).

VICTOR: *Bert Lown's* *By My Side* is featured as the Victor popular Record of the Month—a slow rich performance that gives an excellent idea of the fine tone qualities of this well-rounded band. The coupling is *I'm So Afraid of You*, a good tune, attractively played (22623). *Leonard Joy* leads the *High Hatters* in two dust-raising performances, an energetic *You Said It* and a high-speed *Sweet and Hot*, excellent for the more athletic dancers (22607). *McKinney's Cotton Pickers* are curiously restrained in neat, but uncharacteristic, versions of *Lonesome Old Town* and *She's My Secret Passion* (22628). *Wayne King* plays lushly in a sentimental *Waltz You Saved for Me* and a dreamy *Window in a House in Caroline*, but the tone qualities are good (22575), as they are in the *Troubadour's* mellow *You Didn't Have to Tell Me* and *With All My Heart* (22631). *Doc Daugherty* is bright yet restrained in *Tie a Little String* and a more vigorous *She's a Gorgeous Thing*, embellished by an not-so-comic novelty chorus (23040).

# MUSICAL WEST

MUSIC and the DANCE

"WESTWARD THE COURSE OF MUSIC TAKES ITS WAY"

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## HOT JAZZ

## Red and the Duke

CAN no one contest *Duke Ellington's* and *Red Nichols'* monthly claim for top honors? They're at the top again, the former with his *Jungle Band* and some magnificent pianny playing of his own in an original *Rockin' in Rhythm* (note the masterly use of ostinatos) and *12th St. Rag* (Brunswick 6038), and under his own name in a fascinating accompaniment to a competent rendition of Gershwin's grand ballad of *Sam and Delilah* (coupled with the *Bluejeans'* smooth version of *Bidin' My Time* on Victor 23036. Ellington also appears in the regular Victor lists with *Keep a Song in Your Soul* and the *River and Me* (22614). The treatment is not too hot, nor yet too conventionalized, although both pieces sag after notably fine beginnings; note especially the fine rhapsodic melodic line of the latter. Red Nichols is represented by only one disc, but that's worth a dozen of most hot orchestras. *Bug-a-Boo* is a rhythmic spiritual of his own composing, played with a fine instrumental undertow to a felicitous vocalist, who also stars, but more briefly, in *Corrine Corrina*, a variant of the old southern ballad, *Little Gal* (Brunswick 6058).

## Venuti, et al

*Joe Venuti* is the closest challenger to Red and the Duke. His grand performance of *Getting Hot*, with its dazzling piano, trombone, and fiddle solo work, brings back warming memories of the old days of the Pennies. The coupling is *David Nelson's* steaming virtuoso version of *Some of These Days* (Victor 23039). *King Oliver* makes a welcome return in exhilarating performances of *Stop Cryin'* and *Papa-De-Da-Da*, both spiced with astoundingly barbaric wa-wa vocalisms (Brunswick 6053). The *Red Devils* turn in violent versions of *Dinah* and *Tiger Rag* for Columbia (14586-D), and the Victor "Red Hot Dance" list brings out *Bennie Moten's* high speed but exceedingly smooth adaption of the *Rumba—Rumba Negro Stomp*, coupled with the *Don José Havana* orchestra in authentic example of the popular Cuban Dance—this time the *Candy Man*, pleasant enough, but a long way behind the *Peanut Vendor* (23037). Mention goes also to the notable clarinetting in *David Williams'* ingeniously rhythmic *Beale Street Sheik* and *Darktown Jubilee* (Victor 23264).  
RUFUS

## The Brothers Zighera

SIMULTANEOUS release of a Columbia disc by Mr. Bernard Zighera and the receipt of a batch of Decca recordings by his brother Leon draws marked attention to a musical family rivaling that bearing the name Goossens. Bernard and Leon are as yet the phonographic members of the family, but there is a third brother, Alfred, who sits at the first 'cello desk of the Boston Symphony, where Bernard is first harpist, and who has often appeared with his brother in chamber music concerts by the Boston Flute Players Club and other chamber organizations. While these two have been in America for some five years, Leon is making his first American tour this month, appearing in recital or as soloist with the symphony orchestras in Toronto, Boston, and New York. Unfortunately, he was leaving for the latter city at the very time I arrived at his brother's studio for an interview, so his records had to speak for him, and Bernard for the family.

Before coming to Boston Bernard Zighera played with the Paris Conservatory Orchestra under Gaubert,—before the days, however, when that organization began to record. He had studied harp with Marcel Tournier, piano with S. Riera, and ensemble with Capet, who died only a year or two ago, but not before he and his celebrated string quartet had made the long series of recordings of works by Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Ravel, and Debussy listed in the catalogues of the French and English Columbia Companies, and known to collectors of imported records in this country. (Capet is known in England and America only by his records. The horrors of even a channel voyage, to say nothing of the Atlantic, frightened him more than the most difficult passage in all violin literature!) Mr. Zighera displays the versatility of his family by a pianistic as well as harpistic dexterity. (He is also an amateur caricaturist of devastating satirical insight). He has appeared with the Boston Symphony in the solo roles of Tournier's *Féerie* for harp and orchestra, and William Walton's *Sinfonia Concertante*—one of the most striking works of the young British composer of *Portsmouth Point* and *Façade*. And while he records as a harpist for Columbia—his first release is reviewed among the instrumental records elsewhere in this issue—he may be heard also in the Boston Symphony's Victor records of *Petrouchka*, in which he plays the dashing piano part so prominent in the Russian Dance and the Scene in Petrouchka's room.

Leon Zighera is the violinist of the family, and his talents are revealed in a series of Decca recordings incontestably to be ranked among the best fiddle discs electrical recording has given us. I have heard several: the Bach concerto No. 2 in E major—played with an orchestra conducted by Anthony Bernard (TF-135-6). Corelli's *La Folia* and Pablo de Sara-



Bernard Zighera

(from a self-caricature)

sate's *Players*—No. 5 of the *Dances Espagnoles* (M-154-5, ten-inch discs), and Bloch's *Nigun* (M-144, ten-inch). There are also couplings of Wilhelmj's arrangement of the Bach air on the G string and Pugnani's arrangement of Corelli's *Gavotta Variata* (T-134), Fauré's *Berceuse* and the Rimsky *Chant Hindou* (M-163, ten-inch). The recording throughout is excellent (although the piano accompaniment of *Nigun* is less considerably treated than the violin tone), and the playing is assured, pointed, and sensitively alert. The performance of Bloch's gravely passionate improvisation is easily the best of the several that have been recorded. In *La Folia* the piano is treated more kindly without detracting from the flawless quality of the eloquence and restraint of the solo part. The Bach concerto is the most significant work of the series; the first recording, I believe, and a staunch and invigorating one. Anthony Bernard leads his string orchestra with vigorous sure touch displayed in his Brunswick version of de Falla's *El amor brujo*, and Zighera plays the solo part with an admirable mixture of technical aplomb and interpretive exuberance. A felicitous example of the type of music and performance termed "Bach Without Wig" discussed in my article in February P. M. R. No Bach discographic collection can be held adequate without it.

The Goossens and Casadesus families must look to their laurels: The Brothers Zighera have entered the phonographic lists!  
R. D. D.



# New European Releases

**A**LBERT COATES has been dealt with rather shabbily of late, considering his pre-eminence in the acoustical and early electrical days of recording. It will be a real delight to every staunch phonophile's heart to hear any or all of a new batch of Coates recordings, made under the best modern conditions, and exemplifying his talents more convincingly than most of his scant releases during the last two or three years.

The majority of the pieces in the current group are drawn from the Russian repertory in which he excels. First, a re-recording of an acoustical masterpiece—Tchaikowsky's *Francesca da Rimini* fantasy. Then, the same composer's *Marche Slave*, Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz*, Liadow's little tone poem—*Kikimora*, Borodin's symphonic sketch—*On the Steppes of Central Asia*, the *Cortège des Nobles* from Rimsky's *Mlada*, and the *Gopak* and *Persian Dances* from Moussorgsky's *Khovantchina*. Some of these discs are as yet only released by the Italian or Spanish H. M. V. affiliations, but all may be obtained through the American importers.

## Bellezza

Bellezza, the noted conductor of the Italian repertory at Covent Garden is heard with the Royal Opera Orchestra in a series of Italian works, several of which are recorded for the first time: Respighi: 2nd suite of old dances and airs for the lute, *Introduction to Act 3 of the Love of Three Kings* (first recording from this opera), 2nd intermezzo from *Jewels of the Madonna*, Marinuzzi's *Suite Siciliana*, the intermezzo from Puccini's hitherto unrecorded *Suor Angelica*, Mascagni's *Iris Danza*, the overtures to Rossini's *Tancredi* and *Italiana in Algeri* and Mascagni's *Maschere*, and the *Gavotte* and *Minuet* from Puccini's *Manon*.

## Sibelius

The long awaited tide of major Sibelius recordings, begun by Columbia's issue of the first two symphonies (page 114 of the January P. M. R.) begins to gather added momentum with the European H. M. V. issue of *Ein Saga*, Op. 9, conducted by Eugene Goossens (C-1994-5). The *Saga*, which was recently played by Toscanini in New York, is one of the most important of the series of symphonic poems from Sibelius' pen. Goossens plays it with his usual tidy skill, but the set's merits are considerably negated by its compression to three record sides, throwing out many precious measures to make room for the inevitable *Finlandia*.

## Roussel

The list of recorded works by Roussel grows steadily; the symphonies have not yet been attempted, or *Pour un Fete de Printemps*, but that strange and sensitive insect ballet, *Le Festin de l'Araignée*, is now available in two versions, one played by "Le Trigentour Lyonnais" for French H. M. V. (L-754-5), and the other—more recent—by Straram for French Columbia (LFX-47-8). I have not heard the latter, but Straram's other releases promise well for it. The other version is turned with the proper delicacy, but would have gained by more transparent recording, for the orchestra (a small band of picked soloists) is distinguished by superb tone coloring. The latest addition to the Roussel repertory is the *Suite in F*, introduced in this country a few years ago, and a success wherever it was played. It is quite unlike most of the composer's work (the second symphony possesses comparable geniality, but except for its scintillant scherzo it is scarcely as distinctive); indeed it is almost Graingeresque in its high-spirited vitality. The conductor is Coppola and the filler-in on the fourth record side is "Danses des Nymphes" from Roussel's *Naissance de la Lyre*—a new work, I imagine, for it is not to be found in any lists of his works. The records are French H. M. V. W-1131-2.

## Various Pianists

**S**PANISH music is well to the forefront in a long series of piano releases led by Cortot's disc of Albeniz' *Malaguena*, *Rumores de la Coleta*, *Sequidillas*, and *Chants d'Espagne* (H. M. V.), and Rubinstein's several discs comprising *Granados' La Moja y el Ruiseñor*, *Chopin's Mazurka in C minor*, the dances of *Fire and Terror* from *De Falla's El amor brujo*, *Debussy's Cathedral*, and the *Brahms Capriccio in B minor* (H. M. V.). Lily Dumont plays Albeniz' *Sevilla* (Polydor). . . . Magda Tagliafero plays Mompou's *Jeune Fille au jardin* and *La rue, le guitariste et le vieux cheval* (Fr. H. M. V.). . . . Alexander Tansman plays four original mazurkas (Fr. H. M. V.). . . . Egon Petrie brings out his second recording—*Schubert's Liebesbotschaft* and *Liszt's Gnomenreigen* (H. M. V.). . . . Ruff and Jeanes join forces in *Debussy's little known work for four hands—En blanc et noir*, also *Aubert's Air de Ballet* (Fr. H. M. V.). . . . Marguerite Long plays the two *Debussy Arabesques* (Fr. Col.). . . . Walter Rummel records for the first time with two of his own Bach transcriptions—*Du ciel lointain* and *Mortifie-nous* (Fr. H. M. V.). . . . The first recording of *Chopin's Trois Ecossaises* is made by Jacques Dupont for Pathé. . . . Levitzki appears on records again with the third *Chopin scherzo, C sharp minor* (H. M. V.). . . . and Rosenthal continues his rapidly growing series with *Liadow's Music Box* and *Prelude*, and *Chopin's waltz in E minor* (Parlophone. . . .

The long awaited attack on Chopin's mazurkas has at last begun, and two excellently equipped mazurka players (for they are a special and unique race) each contribute a batch. Friedman records twelve in a four-disc album from English Columbia, and Niedzielski eight (duplicating three of Friedman's) on H. M. V. C-2008-9. Tansman, composer of the popular sonatine *Transatlantique*, makes his phonographic debut with five original mazurkas for French H. M. V.

## Miscellaneous

The best organ discs are the Buxtehude fugue in C and Bach prelude in G played by Lanquettuit (Pathé), Hans Bachem's performance of the allegro from *Handel's first organ concerto* (H. M. V.), and Cunningham's performance of the first movement of *Elgar's organ sonata* (H. M. V.). The 'cellists are led by Maréchal in excerpts from *Vivaldi's concerto in D* and *Bloch's Maisons d'Eternité* (Fr. Col), the violinists by Armida Senetra in *Vivaldi's concerto in A minor* (Parlophone). Landowska is heard in one of her harpsichord recordings, playing *Scarlatti's Sonata No. 9* and *Couperin's Le rossignol en amour* (Sp. H. M. V.).

Noel Coward and Gertrude Lawrence record two scenes from "Private Lives," now playing in New York (H. M. V.). . . . La Argentina may now be heard in a re-recorded album of her best known dances, castanets accompanied by full symphony orchestra (Sp. Odeon). . . . Josephine Baker, the blues singer who has captivated the continent, records many of her best hits for the Columbia Company in France. . . . Carillon admirers will be interested in the disc of *Changes rung on the Bells of St. Margaret's, Westminster* (H. M. V.). . . .

## Operas

*Gondoliers*, complete, Columbia Lt. Opera Co. (Eng. Col)  
*Patience*, complete, D'Oyly Carte Co. (H. M. V.)  
*Faust*, complete, cond. by Busser, with Journet, Berthon, Vezanni, etc. (Fr. H. M. V.)  
*Il Trovatore*, complete, cond. by Molajoli, with La Scala artists (Italian Columbia)  
*Götterdämmerung—Final Scene*, Marguerite Soyer with orch. cond. by Coppola (Gr. H. M. V.)  
*Siegfried—Brünnhilde's Awakening*, Margarethe Bäumer and Reimer Minton, (Parlophone)



## Orchestral

- Bach: Brandenburg concerto No. 3, Furtwängler (Polydor)  
 Beethoven: 7th Symphony, Knappertsbusch cond. (Parlophone)  
 Berlioz: Benvenuto Cellini and Les Troyens à Catharge overtures, Monteux (French H. M. V.)  
 Borodin: Prince Igor—March and Dances, Leo Blech (Electrola)  
 Brahms: 3rd Symphony, Krauss—Vienna Phil. (H. M. V.)  
 Bruneau: preludes to Attaque du Moulin and Ouragan, Bruneau (Pathé)  
 Debussy: Fêtes et Nuages, Wolff (Polydor)  
 D'Indy: Fervaal prelude, Defauw (Fr. Columbia)  
 Ducasse: Sarabande, Monteux (Fr. H. M. V.)  
 Dvorak: Scherzo Capriccioso, Kleiber (Ultraphon)  
 Elgar: 1st Symphony; Crown of India suite, Elgar (H. M. V.) de Falla: Nights in the Gardens of Spain, Seville Sym. (Eng. Columbia)  
 Franck: Redemption, Wolff (Polydor), and Concerts Poulet (Parlophone); le Chasseur Maudit, Goossens (H. M. V.)  
 Handel: Concerto for harp and orch, Laskine (Decca)  
 Honegger: Roi Pausole overt. and Ballet, Honegger (Fr. Odeon)  
 Inghelbrecht: Sinfonia breve, Inghelbrecht (Pathé)  
 Liszt: Mephisto Waltz, Defauw (Fr. Col)  
 Massenet: Les Erynnés, Casadesu (Parlophone)  
 Mendelssohn: Hebrides overt., Rosenstock (Parlophone), and Bodanzky (Odeon)  
 Moszkowsky: From Foreign Parts, Järnefelt (Parlophone)  
 Mozart: Masonic Funeral Music and Seraglio overt., Blech (Electrola)  
 Rabaud: Eglogue, Rabaud (Fr. Odeon)  
 Rimsky-Korsakow: Capriccio Espagnol, Wolff (Polydor)  
 Rossini-Respighi: Boutique Fantasque, Goossens (H. M. V.)  
 Schubert: Unfinished Symphony, Prüwer (Polydor)  
 Strauss: Till Eulenspiegel, Furtwängler (Polydor)  
 Strawinski: Petrouchka, Pierné (Fr. Odeon)

## Choral

- Gregorian Chant—Alleluiah, Kyrie, Beata dei Genitrix, Salve solemne, etc., Choir of Monks at Montserrat (Sp. H. M. V.)  
 Gregorian chant—excerpts from Mass No IX and Night Office of Compline, by Benedictine Fathers of Ampleforth Abbey (H. M. V.)  
 Mozart: Requiem—Dies Irae—Lacrymosa, Choir of St. Williams, Strasbourg (Parlophone)  
 Caldara: Regina coeli laetare Berliner Domchor (Musica Sacra)  
 Vittoria: Caligaverunt oculi mei, Paderborner Domchor (Musica Sacra)  
 Jannequin: Bataille de Marignan, Chanterie de la Renaissance (Fr. Col.)

## Songs

- de Falla: Chansons Espagnols, Soneto a Cordoba, etc., Barrientos, acc. by Manuel de Falla (Fr. Odeon)  
 Dvorak: Biblical Songs, Egon Fuchs (Bohemian H. M. V.)  
 Dupare: Chanson triste and Invitation au voyage, Vallin (Pathe)  
 Nin: Malaguena, Montagnarde, Polo, etc., Vallin (Fr. Odeon)  
 Tchaikowski: Wann ich das gewusst and War ich nicht ein frisches Graskin, Xenia Belmas (Polydor)  
 Tailleferre: Chansons Françaises, Jane Bathori (Fr. Col)  
 Strauss: Mutterlandelei, and Marx: Marienlied, Elis. Schumann (H. M. V.)  
 Strauss: Morgen and Von ewiger Liebe, Bettendorf (Parlophone)

## Chamber music

- Bach: Sonata in G, Adolf Busch and R. Serkin (H. M. V.)  
 Beethoven: Septet, Leners with Draper, etc., (Eng. Col.); Harp Quartet, Rose Quartet (H. M. V.)  
 Franck: Violin Sonata, Massia and Selva (Fr. Col.)  
 Mozart: Sonata B flat (K. 454), Morini and Kentner (H. M. V.); Sonata in F Grete Eweler and Alice Ehlers (Parlophone)  
 Saint-Saëns: Septet, anonymous artists (Parlophone)

## Current Importations

## Guffaw

**W**ILLIAM WALTON'S *Façade* is eleven bits of apparently disunited music into which are recited poems by Edith Sitwell. Miss Sitwell, the poet, and Mr. Constant Lambert, the composer of *Rio Grande*, recite the poems. The score would not seem to make any demands upon the reciters. Nor do the poems demand much of the score. Both come out at the same time, having met, more or less closely on the way. At the meeting everybody had a good time, and nobody did anybody any harm.

The greatest success, probably, that these compositions have had, was their effect upon the eminent Ernest Newman. Mr. Newman heard the original performance and became forthwith converted both to Miss Sitwell's verse and Mr. Walton's music. As Mr. Newman is not much for Georgian poetry more than he is for Strawinski *et al*, this was a considerable achievement.

"*Façade*"—I quote from Mr. Newman's comment—"was produced at the Chenil Galleries, London, on April 27, 1926. The audience was warned that it might regard *Façade* as an entertainment and that it need not repress any impulse to laugh if it felt one. The megaphone was placed in the mouth of a big face painted half in white, half in pink, on the curtain. The orchestra, behind this curtain, consisted of piccolo, flute, clarinet, bass clarinet, saxophone, and percussion."

If all the audiences these records have imagine themselves similarly confronted with a faceless megaphone, they ought to enjoy the fun as much as Ernest Newman, who "not only stayed to the end but added his voice and umbrella to the

clamor for encores of the best 'items' long after the official proceedings were finished."

"These, in fact," says Mr. Newman, are saxophone tunes, not violin melodies, and must be played on the right instrument, with the right technique, and the right spirit. . . . When the true-born Briton (Mr. Walton) settled down to the true-born Briton's historic role of guying things that have a natural touch of absurdity about them, he was . . . priceless. Here is obviously a humorous musical talent of the first order; nothing so good in the mock-serious line of music has been heard for a long time as the 'Valse', the 'Polka', the 'Jodeling Song,' and 'I do like to be beside the seaside,' and the deft workmanship, especially in the orchestration, made the heart of the listening musician glad."

William Butler Yeats used to think that when in any public performance verse was to be sung, the performers might as well forget the verse altogether, and sing rather something useful to be known by heart—such as a list of railroad stations or the recipe of a favorite dessert. The audience never catch on to the words in any circumstance; music deformed them, hid them, or at least took away all their verbal values; music transformed the words to mere sounds. The argument, from the point of view of a poet at any rate, was just, and could be in no way gainsaid. The audience, with programmes, would be as pleased, or displeased, in any case; and the performers would benefit.

But Mr. Yeats did not know the poems of Edith Sitwell or the music of Walton, and if he had could never have guessed what a conjunction the two might make. I say conjunction, and I might almost say opposition. Certainly there is no merger. The words and the music do a preposterous best

\*Walton: *Façade*, poems recited by Edith Sitwell and Constant Lambert with orchestral accompaniment. Decca T-124-5 (2D12s).



to hinder each other. If you try to listen to the poems either in Miss Sitwell's somewhat orotund elocution or Mr. Lambert's pyrotechnic patter, the music will irritate you, snare you, drag you away. If you try to listen to the music alone, the recited words race through the vivid percussion and somewhat starched rhythms, like a fire engine through orderly traffic. If you try to listen to both together, as a serious effort of the aural faculty, you will find no possible combination of the two distractions, which will permit you to do the two things at once. In short, you will be stung fore and aft at once and the same time.

The alternative is to face the *Façade*. Face the music and let it happen. Or let it rip. Or whatever it is that you think it does. You will not be able to deny that it makes a magnificent disorderly house out of the dim salon of musical appreciation. It is burlesque; and it has the capacity proper to all good burlesque—the capacity to dig up the bawdy elements of the soul and then to set them off—among the solemn virtues—in a loud guffaw. Only the music has to have something solid to burlesque, a real god to mock, and the audience has to know what that solid is, before the affair can be very successful. That is when music is laughing at itself it must have a self to laugh at, not something outside itself.

*Façade* is successful. The guffaw is genuine as it is here recorded. But it is doubtful whether with less expert performers than Miss Sitwell and Mr. Lambert the thing would come off. The music alone might find competent performance anywhere, but to recite poems into music which are at once "modern" and "poetic" so that they would have at once no meaning and all the meaning there is in nonsense—that is not likely to be often possible. It would be difficult, too, to find a willing audience, for the audience must come to *Façade* as it would to a burlesque show—prepared to laugh at matters which, to another frame of mind, would be but dully enervating. Here we have the double advantage of phonograph records: the unique performance for the score, and complete availability to the audience.

R. P. BLACKMUR

### Kleiber's Coriolan

The best recordings to date of Beethoven's Coriolan overture have been those conducted by Mengelberg for Columbia and by Casals for Victor. Both are on the conservative order. Now comes Kleiber with the Berlin Philharmonic in a later recording of the overture on Ultraphon E-653, echoing some of the sturdy muscular force of Casals' reading, but little of the romantic warmth of Mengelberg's. His performance is more incisive than the others, and recorded with the powerful brilliance of the Ultraphon discs previously reviewed in these pages. The strings are somewhat too metallic, but the horns and wood wind are caught with fine sonority and color, and the playing is pointed and forcible, rather cold perhaps, but vividly dramatic.

### Le Chant de Nigamon

Honegger's symphonic poem, *Chant de Nigamon* (European Decca KF-553) pleases me only by its performance and recording, done under the direction of a conductor who has been missing from discs too long—Rhené-Baton, to whom the piece was dedicated. The orchestra is that of the Concerts Pasdeloup, Paris. Honegger composed the *Chant* as an exercise when he was in the orchestral class of the Paris Conservatory in 1917. It is an inferior piece of program music, full of sound and fury, and embodying three American Indian themes (scarcely recognizable under the gaudy trappings of the post war orchestral idiom). The argument is from one of Gustave Aimard's adventure stories: "Tareah, the Huron, had reserved Nigamon and the other Iroquois to be burned alive. . . . The Iroquois began their death-song; but when Nigamon lifted up his voice, the others stopped to listen." The Indian themes are war songs of the Iroquois and Hurons, and an Iroquois melody—the "Warrior's Last Word." Rhené-Baton's performance is vastly more effective than that by the composer I heard several years ago, but even his earnest efforts fail to give the work conviction or significance.

## VICTOR-COLUMBIA BRUNSWICK

### Records and Album Sets

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### Mozart Concertos

TWO Mozart concertos in D major, one for flute and orchestra and the other for pianoforte and orchestra, are among the recent importations. Each is noteworthy since all too few of Mozart's concertos have been recorded, and since neither of the works presented on these records seems to have been available hitherto in an electrical recording.

The flute concerto in D major (K. 314), is the second of Mozart's flute concertos. Both seem to have been written during his stay in Mannheim in 1777 or 1778. Parts of the second are already familiar, since the Andante and Finale were recorded earlier by H. M. V., but with an inadequate orchestral part. The music is not profound—the Mozart of the late symphonies is not revealed—but it is graceful and light, and has always the style and form (in the best sense of both words) which are so often the hallmark of this composer. Mozart is said not to have liked the flute, at least in his early years, but at Mannheim he apparently changed his views. At least he wrote for it admirably in this composition. The solo part is elaborate enough, in all conscience, and is probably exacting to play, but it shows a full grasp of the potentialities of the instrument and great skill in writing for it. Many lovers distrust concertos, dreading long dull passages which show the virtuosity of the soloist but add little to the musical content. There is nothing of that here. Mozart exhibits the soloist and his instrument by writing for it music which is delightful and sparkling in itself, not by composing showy passages of "fireworks." There is, too, especially in the solo passages of the Andante, a wistfulness in the melody which expresses itself admirably in the tone of the flute. The first movement, on two record sides, Allegro Aperto, is typical gay Mozart. Toward the end there is a long cadenza, named on the label of the record "Cadenza du Donjon," but it too keeps away from mere display. The Andante is neither as striking nor as moving as many of Mozart's slow movements, but it is still charming music. The Finale, Allegro, is cut, only two-thirds or less of the full score as printed in the Breitkopf and Hartel edition being played, though there is a cadenza of some length inserted. The recording is good but not unusual. The flute reproduces beautifully and the orchestra is well balanced with it.

As for the piano concerto in D major, it is one of Mozart's two famous "coronation" concertos, so called because it was, according to Köchel, written for the coronation celebration in Frankfort in 1790. It is number 537 in Köchel's

MOZART: *Concerto in D major*, for flute, played by M. MARCEL MOYSE, soloist of the Concerts du Conservatoire, with orchestra conducted by PIERO COPPOLA. FRENCH H. M. V. L-835-836 (2 D12s).

MOZART: *Concerto in D major*, ("Le Couronnement"), for pianoforte, played by MAGDA TAGLIAFERO, with the PASDELOUP ORCHESTRA, conducted by REYNALDO HAHN. DECCA TF-141-144 (4 D12s).



index. It is played often enough today to need no detailed description, and it is enough to point out that among the many pianoforte concertos written by Mozart it has always ranked high. "Brilliant and stately" is Jahn's phrase for it. It is "late" Mozart—the seriousness, the melancholy (if one likes), the feeling of music closely packed with emotional and intellectual content, are all here. As one hears it the jump from Mozart to Beethoven, especially to the latter's Fourth Piano Concerto seems but a tiny step.

Mozart's compositions for the piano are notoriously hard to play well, but Magda Tagliafero gives at the very least a thoroughly adequate reading. She avoids the common vice of playing the Andante too slowly; in that movement especially, built up as it is on a simple and haunting phrase, the definiteness and restraint, yet warmth, of her playing, make hearing a delight. The orchestral part is consistently well recorded, and these records seem smoother in surface and far less given to blurring than some earlier Deccas, good as they have been. Indeed, from the standpoint of recording, these discs hold a place among the very good reproductions of works for the pianoforte. The one marked defect seems to be a slightly disproportionate heaviness in the rendering of the lower registers of the solo instrument. Even if the records were bad, however, they should be greeted heartily, since there is, apparently, only one other Mozart piano concerto electrically recorded. Anything which tends to correct this curious neglect of so large a group of fine compositions, is a step in the right direction. Moreover this concerto deserves a special place for its intrinsic merits, and its recording enriches the stock of really good music available for the phonograph.

In both these concertos the finales are considerably cut from the Breitkopf and Härtel score. Probably there are no omissions other than those conventionally made in concert performances, but it is possible to wish, none the less, that record manufacturers would indicate when the versions they reproduce are condensed or edited. No reputable publisher would bring out an expurgated classic without indicating that it had been altered from the original. Is it too much to ask that when records are labelled simply with the name of a composition, the buyer be safe in accepting them as complete renditions of the score, and that edited versions be always so marked as to indicate what has been left out?

KENNETH B. MURDOCK

### Strawinski's Nightingale

Although started years previously, Strawinski's opera *The Nightingale* remained unfinished until 1914 and it was not performed until May 5, 1923, when it was presented at Mannheim. The libretto is based on a tale by Hans Andersen and is somewhat as follows:

A little brown bird sings so beautifully that the Emperor of China coaxes it to dwell in his palace. But envoys of the Emperor of Japan bring a present to the Chinese ruler in the form of an artificial nightingale whose music-box trills and clockwork antics so delight the Son of Heaven and his courtiers that the little Brown Singer is forgotten. The Emperor commands the real bird to sing but it has flown away, whereupon the angry ruler banishes it from his realm. Then Death comes, seats himself on the Emperor's bed, steals his sceptre and crown, and is about to lay his icy hand upon his brow when the little Nightingale flies in and sings with such eloquence that Death is touched and foregoes his prey. In the morning, the courtiers who come into the bed-chamber expecting to find the monarch dead, find him quite well and happy.

The general thought underlying this unique thirty minute opera is that machinery is the enemy of man.

The various acts show an incongruity of style due to the wide period of composition, extending from pre-*Firebird* to post-*Sacre*. The opera was not thoroughly successful and Strawinski, being dissatisfied, "re-hashed" the stronger parts into a symphonic poem which he calls *The Song of the Nightingale*. This orchestral work, drawn from the second

STRAWINSKI: *Song of the Nightingale Suite—Chinese March*, played by the LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, conducted by ALBERT COATES. H. M. V. D-1932 (D12).

and third acts of the opera, was finished in 1917 and first performed (in Paris) in 1920. The Russian Ballet produced it later using a scenario based upon the opera libretto.

Some months ago, I suggested at the end of my Strawinski series that it might be a good plan for some enterprising company to record the famous *Chinese March* which is utilized in all the above versions. It was indeed a happy surprise when I learned that it had been recorded by H. M. V., with Albert Coates conducting.

This composition may disappoint the Strawinskian novice because it is so unlike the usual march. Perhaps the nearest parallel is the "dance" in Richard Strauss' *Zarathustra*, a section which but faintly suggests a dance rhythm. But the Russian Cagliostro is ever present with his ingenious orchestration. Call it circus trickery if you like, but Strawinski always offers interesting tricks; he is often hard to understand but he is never dry: each succeeding measure brings forth new surprises. There is a tempestuous opening followed by numerous portions faintly reminiscent of *Sacre*, while the orchestration, in the quiet loneliness of the closing, strangely suggests to me a section of Respighi's *Fountains of Rome*. Coates is very generous in this particular instance since the record utilizes more than the march proper. The march really starts at the beginning of the second side, and ends just before the sudden crash (one inch from the end of the record). The balance of the second side and all of the first side are merely the sections before and after the march in the orchestral suite.

Again Coates gives us a performance which is nothing short of a *tour de force*. He, together with Stokowski, are assuredly the twin Goliaths of the phonograph. The recording is excellent and the surface a great improvement over some of the earlier Coates discs. This is truly a sensational and worthy disc, deserving the honor of being repressed at some future date, adding new blood to the already healthy Coates series.

WILLIAM H. SELTSAM

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# The Phonophile's Bookshelf

## Verdi in Outline

VERDI. By Ferruccio Bonavia. London: Humphrey Milford, The Oxford University Press. 161 pages. 12 s.

Neither Verdi's life nor temperament was the kind that attracts numerous biographers. He did not exhibit any of the flagrant eccentricities that we are apt to consider indispensable to genius. This is very little material for the teller of anecdotes, very little for the psychologist; very little, in short, to attract romancing writers. Verdi was a plain man who believed in himself and in his talent, and who worked very hard.

It is perhaps the chief merit of Mr. Bonavia's slim and competent volume that it approaches the task of telling the story of Verdi's life with this fact about his character taken for granted. Hence there is no obscuring awe, no paralyzing veneration. There is no attempt to tell anything about Verdi but the facts, as these have been set forth by his earlier biographers, and by the recently published "Copiallettere," the copies which Verdi made of all of his letters.

Interspersed with copious quotations from the letters, the narrative proceeds in strictly temporal sequence. Each event is presented clearly, and at the same time as briefly as possible. The reader is not cast adrift upon a sea of meaningless particulars. He is guided clearly through the course of Verdi's development. The author discusses each opera at some length, gives pertinent information about its composition and performance, and presents a critical estimate of its place in Verdi's work as a whole.

The political and social developments of the times in which Verdi figured in his later years, furnish a background for the story which both gives it unity and relates it to our other knowledge of the nineteenth century. Too often a biography proceeds as if its subject were the only man who ever lived. In this one, happily, we can become well-acquainted with Verdi's contemporaries. His relations with Rossini and Boito are sympathetically told.

Mr. Bonavia writes a fluent English prose. He is workmanlike and precise. And it is because of these qualities, very likely, that we do not feel, when we have finished his book, that we have come to know Verdi with that intimate sense of acquaintance that one derives from a full-rounded portrait. He remains a figure, instead of becoming a friend. But there is much virtue in such a presentation: fact is worth more than poetry in these matters.

R. S. A.

## Columbia Supplementary Catalogue

Columbia's general record catalogue is now brought up to date by the issue of the 1931 Supplementary Catalogue which contains all records listed from October 1929 to and including December 1930. The supplement corresponds in format and arrangement to the General Catalogue, and runs to 176 pages, including a tinted section of some 30 pages devoted to Masterworks and celebrity releases. In the main body of the catalogue the system of arrangement is that is that adopted in the 1929 general catalogue—alphabetical throughout with each disc listed under the names of its selections and also under the name of the artist. There is also a very helpful index of composers, and in the body of the catalogue many convenient cross-references by types of compositions, instruments, etc. Every phonophile is thoroughly familiar with the Masterworks and celebrity releases by Columbia during the past year, but the present catalogue will serve as a helpful reminder of this considerable and significant contribution to recorded literature, and in addition a guide to a number of extremely interesting works—many of them released under black labels—that may have escaped his attention or memory.

The catalogue is available from any Columbia dealer, directly from The Columbia Phonograph Company, 1819 Broadway, New York City.

## The Phono-Musical Press

ARBEITERFUNK. (Weekly) Offizielles Organ des Arbeiter-Radio-Bundes Deutschlands E. V. 90 pfg. month in Germany. Foreign rate not stated. Alexandrinenstrasse 37, Berlin S. 42, Germany.

MUSIC (ORCHESTRAL EDITION) (Monthly) Published by F. R. Verneuil. 35 Rue du Forse aux Loups, Brussels. American subscription rate, \$2.50 a year.

The German weekly, Arbeiterfunk, is the official publication of the German Workers Radio Union, and is devoted almost entirely to news and technical aspects of the radio and broadcasting. The passionate experimenter will no doubt find its many hook-up diagrams and descriptions of new German instruments of keen appeal, but the paper will be of more interest to the average American music lover by virtue of its long lists of daily programs of the leading European broadcasting stations. Even the most cursory glance down these long columns of broadcasts by stations all over the continent (not excluding Russia and Spain) causes a pang of envy to the theoretical believer in radio who can find so little to suit a discriminating musical taste in the programs of American stations. It is significant to note the frequent occurrence of "Schallplatten" (i.e., phonograph records) broadcast.

The Belgian monthly holds a wider appeal to Americans, especially to those interested in dance music. Indeed two full dance orchestrations are included in each issue. In the February copy at hand (Vol. VII, No. 67) are Reel-Wendt's Ragged Man, and Hamy-Paques' Garden Party—the latter arranged for solo piano and jazz orchestra. The complete parts for each instrument are included. In the magazine proper R. Verneuil writes an editorial on the development of jazz on the continent. There are articles on John Ouwerx, Lud Gluskin and his orchestra, "Des Disques du 'Hot'". Music on the Riviera, Trombones, Dancing, reviews of new jazz discs—and in the latter part of the magazine a section for those interested in other types of music. Henri Prunieres gives his impressions of concerts in America (dealing largely with Koussevitzky's performance of Roussel's new symphony, and the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge chamber music concerts in Washington; Emile Vuillermoz writes on French Music, new recordings of classical music are reviewed by Gaston Brenta, current Belgian recitals are commented on, there are book reviews and miscellaneous musical news notes. A bright little publication, invaluable to the jazzically minded, interesting to phonophiles of every type.

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## Czechoslovakian Reviews

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following reviews of several outstanding European chamber music recordings were sent to us by E. Ugge, of Nitra, C. S. R., who contributed the Bartok discography to the correspondence column of the December 1930 P. M. R. Mr. Ugge also wrote a review of the Harsanyi records discussed by Richard Gilbert in the March issue.

MARCELLO: *Sonata in F major* (Largo and Allegro). Two sides. Played by RUDOLPH HINDEMITH and ALICE EHLERS. HOMOCORD 3652.

Homocord records are, as I suppose, familiar to American music lovers, but in America, perhaps, the information on such records is not easy to come by. Therefore I advise American readers of some very good European recordings and I hope that these records will be available through your American importers.

Every lover of Italian music of the XVIII century will be enchanted with the present recordings. Benedetto Marcello (the "Great") was an Italian composer living in the early years of the XVIII century. His art is neglected today, but I am convinced that all music lovers and record connoisseurs will be delighted that the mentioned sonata. Rudolph Hindemith is a brother of the famous Paul Hindemith. Both are members of the world-known Amar-Hindemith Quartet (recording for Polydor). The present recording gives excellent opportunity to Rudolph Hindemith, who plays the violoncello, and to Mrs. Ehlers (cembalo) to give us their best. Alone the combination of violoncello and cembalo gives us a very effective result.

GIUSEPPE TARTINI: *Concerto in D major for Violoncello and Orchestra* (Largo, Allegro, Grave, Allegro). Played by RUDOLPH HINDEMITH with the BERLIN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA. HOMOCORD 9009 and 9012 (2 D12s).

Rudolph Hindemith and the Berlin Symphony Orchestra are competent artists to make a good record of Tartini's music. All admirers of old Italian music will be enchanted with the present discs. Tartini was a very prolific composer. This concerto is full of grace and dignity, and surfeited with passion. This concerto is perhaps the most characteristic work of classical music of the XVIII century. This perfect interpretation is recorded excellently.

PABLO DE SARASATE: *Zigeunerweiser* (Gypsy Airs). Violoncello solo by PROF. ARMED FOLDESZ with piano accompaniment by Dr. FELIX GUNTHER. HOMOCORD 9051.

This work of Pablo de Sarasate is known to American collectors in two or three violin versions on Columbia and H. M. V. Victor records. This Földesz violoncello version is to be preferred to all violin versions (such as those by Mishel Piastro or by Jascha Heifetz). The surface and recording are excellent.

E. UGGE

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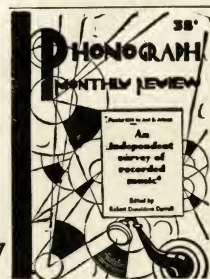
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